

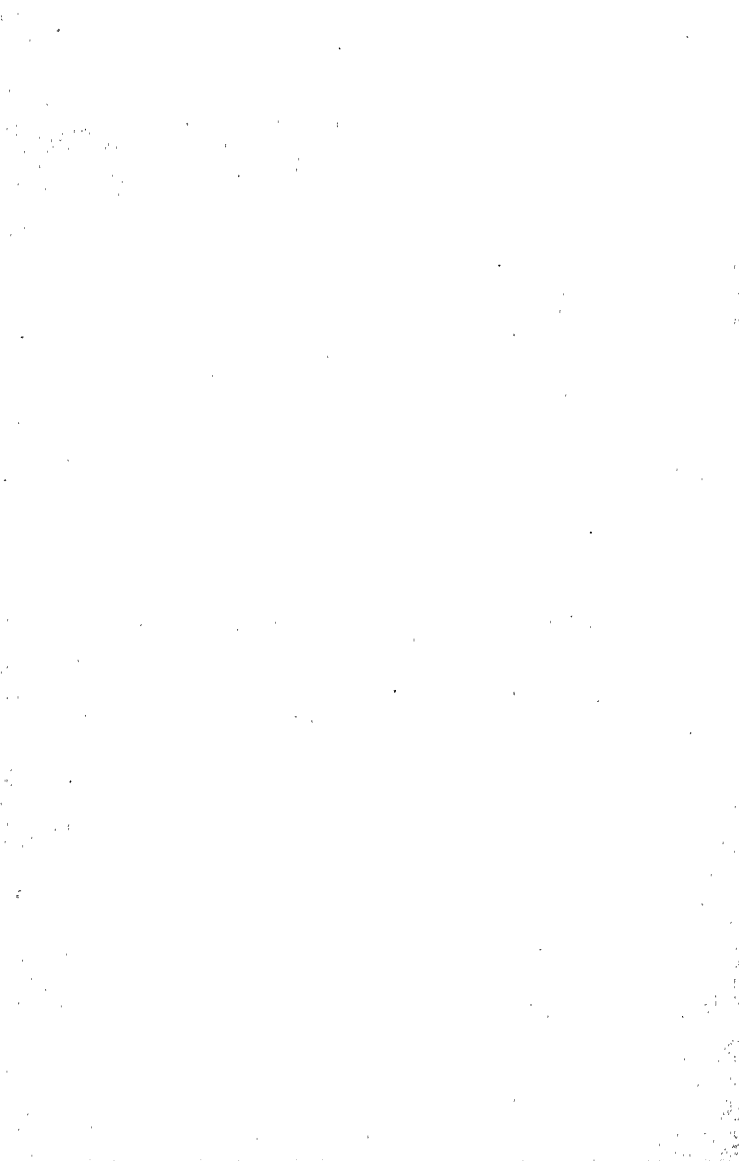
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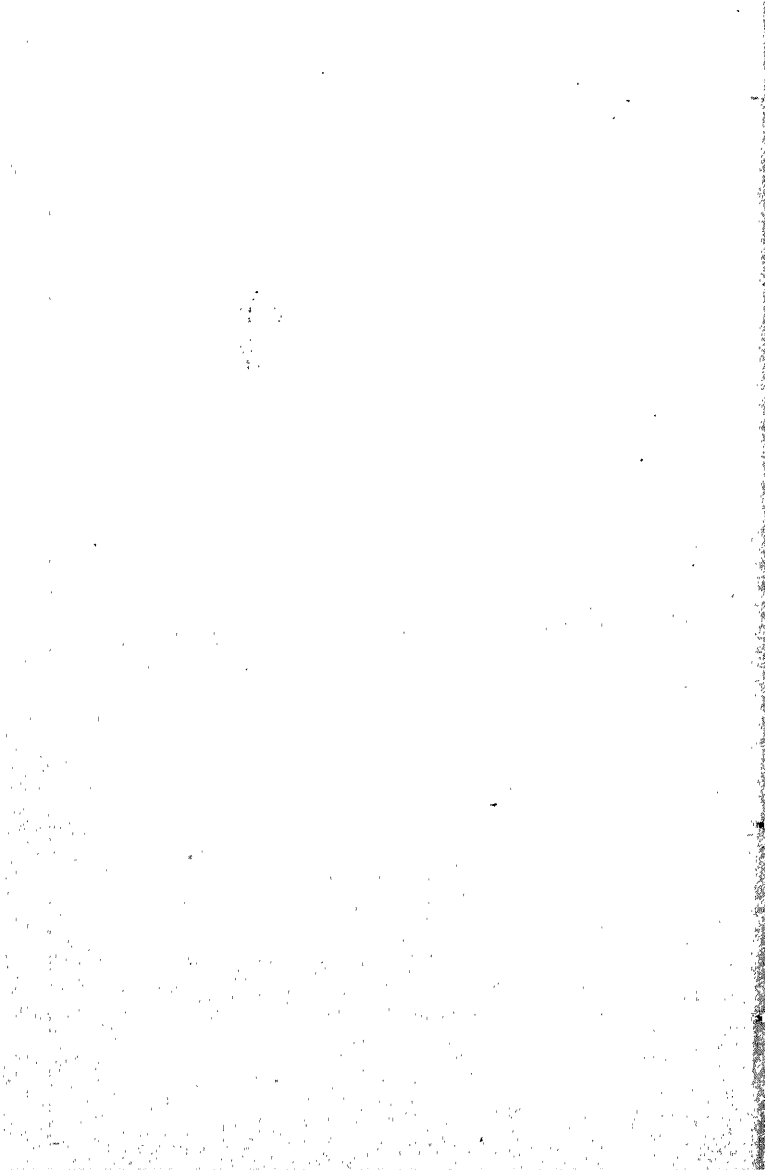
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FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS IN AESTHETICS



Fundamental Questions in Aesthetics



47573

P. C. CHATTERJI

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INDIAN INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDY, SIMLA

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TO

my wife

PREFACE

It has been contended that less has been said to the point in aesthetics than on any other subject. Mr. Clive Bell, who expressed this view in his delightful book *Art*, in the first decade of this century, gave two reasons for this state of affairs. To make any headway in aesthetics two qualities are required which rarely go together—artistic sensitivity and hard, patient logical thinking. Those who are artistically sensitive do not bother their heads to analyse their experience and discriminate the factors involved in appreciation. On the other hand, those who are capable of patient and logical thought generally lack taste. Their theories might explain the facts but they are the wrong facts. This analysis goes a long way to explain the lack of progress in the field of aesthetics. But it is not the whole story. In the last fifty years or so, when there has been a renewed interest in aesthetics, persons of taste and philosophical ability such as Clive Bell himself, Collingwood and Susanne Langer, to mention only the most distinguished, have concerned themselves with this subject. While they have produced some novel theories of aesthetics I doubt whether the discipline of aesthetics has advanced very much as a result of their endeavours. The reason for this, in my view, is that each one of them has been concerned to give us just another theory of aesthetics as a whole. These theories might be all very well but frequently they throw little light on the specific problems which confront the critic or any one else who wishes

to understand and appreciate works of art. In this respect aesthetics seems to have, till very recently, remained outside the main current of analysis in Anglo-American philosophy.

In other words, as I see it, the trouble is that we have not seriously set about the task of formulating the fundamental questions in aesthetics. And this business of asking the right questions is not an easy matter. Questions may be meaningless, confused, ambiguous or irrelevant to the task in hand. Unless philosophers turn their attention to the problem of clarifying and stating precisely what are the questions which have to be asked, nothing substantial can be achieved.

In recent years no doubt the linguistic analysts have been taking an interest in aesthetics. While I am in sympathy with their approach, in so far as it involves the raising of specific issues, I find that most often their answers to questions are based on conclusions which they have arrived at in other branches of philosophy. Their attempt frequently seems to be to dissolve questions to show that they do not arise. But if the old questions are meaningless or pseudo questions, then what are the questions which should replace them? To this, not much attention has been paid so far.

It is proposed in the following pages to formulate and to attempt to answer some of the fundamental questions which arise in artistic appreciation. I trust that the answers provided are not inconsistent with each other but they are not expected to add up to anything like a theory of aesthetics. The main point is to indicate the problems.

I am deeply grateful to Dr. Niharranjan Ray, Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla for his interest in my work and for his encouragement. But for him and the assistance I have received from the Institute my project

would not have seen the light of day. The first fruits of my study were presented in a lecture in Calcutta many years ago, under his distinguished chairmanship and I am happy to think that the work has also been completed under his auspices.

P. C. CHATTERJI

Rashtrapati Nivas,
Simla.
22 July, 1968.

CONTENTS

<i>Preface</i>	..	..	vii
----------------	----	----	-----

Chapter I

<i>Is Aesthetics Possible?</i>	...	<i>Pages</i>	<i>1—30</i>
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The various arguments put forward by the neo-positivists for supposing that aesthetics is impossible are examined.

(a) Aesthetics can be pursued, after Plato and Aristotle, without trying to find a definition of art, though the search for a definition was generally the practice of Kant and Hegel and their followers. (b) The arguments for supposing that the search for a definition of art is a *prima-facie* absurdity are examined and shown to be fallacious. (c) The analogy between ethics and aesthetics is explored and the arguments for supposing that evaluation is possible in ethics but impossible in aesthetics are examined and rebutted. (d) It is suggested that aesthetics can usefully clarify concepts employed in interpreting and evaluating the arts in general or particular groups of arts.

Chapter II

<i>The Art Object And How You Know It</i>	...	<i>Pages</i>	<i>31—53</i>
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The function of aesthetics is two-fold; to interpret and to evaluate. The first function implies that we should get clear as to what constitutes the art object. Three theories have been distinguished; (a) The solipsistic theory of the art object, (b) the Croce-Collingwood theory and (c) the

common-sense theory. The alternatives (a) and (b) are examined and rejected. The common-sense view is defended according to which the work of art is an objective fact which has to be discovered. A basis is thus provided for the objectivity of aesthetic judgements. The process of getting to know works of art is examined and is compared and contrasted with knowing other objects.

Chapter III

Art and Imagination ... *Pages 54—80*

The Croce-Collingwood theory that the work of art is an imaginary object is examined and rejected. The illusion theory as presented by Alexander and Langer is analysed. It is shown that the word 'illusion' is being used in a technical sense and creates confusion. The view that works of art are instances of supposal is examined and defended.

Chapter IV

Art and Feeling ... *Pages 81—107*

Several senses of feeling are distinguished of which three are singled out as relevant to the question: What is the relation between feeling and art? These are (a) 'to feel when it means 'to sense' (b) 'to feel that X is the case' (c) 'to feel when it means to experience an emotion'. While (a) and (b) are dealt with briefly (c) is discussed in detail with reference to the question: in what way is a work of art an expression of emotion? and what is the relation between the emotional response to works of art and emotional response to every-day situations? The views of Langer and Bell are examined.

Chapter V

Towards a Theory of Value ... Pages 108—149

Evaluation does not necessitate the assignment of value in quantitative terms: all that is necessary is grading. Aesthetic evaluation implies a theory of value in general within which aesthetic value can be defined. Intuitionist and the neo-positivist theories of value are examined and it is contended that neither is satisfactory. This unsatisfactoriness is traced to two common premises—(a) the object theory of meaning and (b) a common model for the evaluative statement which is formulated as "This is good". It is contended that evaluative statements are propositional functions similar to mathematical propositions. This view is explained and defended.

Chapter VI

Aesthetic Criteria ... Pages 150—176

Evaluative statements in aesthetics are shown to be a sub-class of evaluative statements in general. The contention that evaluation necessitates the acceptance of a definition of art is criticised. Art objects can be evaluated in terms of two groups of characteristics—(a) generic qualities which are shared by all art objects (and some others) and (b) those which are peculiar to specific arts or groups of arts. The generic characteristics of art are *order*, *simplicity*, *coherence* and *compactness*. The principle of organic unity is considered and rejected as meaningless. The specific formal characteristics of poetry are also considered. It is claimed that the generic or specific characteristics discussed are

empirical and therefore open to verification or falsification as in other disciplines.

Chapter VII

Truth and Poetic Evaluation . . . Pages 177—199

The basic requirements which works of art must fulfil if the notion of truth is to be applicable to art are indicated. Thereafter the application of truth to poetry is discussed in detail. It is contended that poetic statements are both emotive and descriptive; the emotive function is dependent on the descriptive. Scientific and poetic statements are distinguished; poetic statements describe not only the relations between external events but the manner in which these events affect the poet. The respects in which a poem may be false or true are examined. The question as to how we can show that a particular poem is true or false is a different and difficult question but no more difficult than proving the truth or falsity of a proposition about history, a scientific theory or a metaphysic. The analogy between poetry and metaphysics is pursued and an attempt is made to show that in the evaluation of a poem the distinction between important and trivial is more relevant than the distinction between true and false.

Index . . . Pages 200—201

Chapter I

IS AESTHETICS POSSIBLE ?

In philosophy, if not in other spheres, ours is an age of debunking. The debunking of metaphysics which commenced some forty years ago with Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was followed by a summary disposal of moral philosophy. While the earlier Logical Positivists had not thought it worth their powder to devote more than a chapter or two to what they called emotive sentences, a thorough statement of their position was finally presented to the public in Stevenson's *Ethics and Language* in the forties.

More recently, these philosophers, the neo-positivists or linguistic analysts, have started attacking aesthetics. It has been contended that traditional aesthetics rests on a mistake and this and other grounds have been adduced which have challenged the existence of a subject such as aesthetics. To what extent is this attack on traditional aesthetics justified?

The first question which we have to ask ourselves is: what is traditional aesthetics? We are told aesthetics is that branch of philosophy which has tried to answer such questions as "What is Art?" "What is Beauty?" and so on. The answer to

these questions in traditional aesthetics has always been to provide a definition of beauty or a definition of art. Support for this view is sought in works by authors who pursue so-called traditional aesthetics. Thus for instance, the well-known American author Mr. DeWitt Parker says¹ that aesthetics sets out to find some characteristic or group of characteristics which are common and peculiar to all works of art. Traditionalists share the belief that there is something which is common to all genuine works of art, whether the work of art be a painting by Jamini Roy, a Beethoven symphony, a philosophical poem of Eliot or a bamboo mug with a design burnt into it such as the Nagas use for drinking rice beer. The problem for aesthetics, so these writers say, has been to find this common and peculiar quality. Once we have found it, we can use it as a yardstick and say—such and such a work has this quality—it is a genuine piece of art; and another work, which may be superficially very attractive, is not a genuine work of art because on more careful scrutiny we find that it does not possess this quality. Both Mr. De Witt Parker, who is a supporter of traditional aesthetics and neo-positivists who think it is impossible, agree on this description of traditional aesthetics. The general thesis put forward by the neo-positivists is that aesthetics is impossible because there is no such common and peculiar characteristic of all works of art. Their contention is that there cannot be a definition of art.²

I shall come to the arguments for this thesis later, but first I want to ask, is this a true description of traditional aesthetics? Or, is the neo-positivist just putting up men of straw so as to have a convenient target to knock down?

Now this question about traditional aesthetics is surely a factual question and the only way to answer it is to turn to

the history of aesthetics and find out what it is that philosophers tried to do.

The view that the function of aesthetics is to find a definition of art is admittedly a common one in the history of philosophy. It was popularised by the great system-makers Kant and Hegel and this line of thought has been continued in modern times by such well-known figures as Croce, Collingwood and indeed by others whose thinking works on quite different basic premises. In the case of Kant, the *Critique of Judgement* was intended to round off a system, the metaphysical and ethical skeleton of which had been provided in the *Critiques of Pure Reason* and *Practical Reason*.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* he had shown that nature must exhibit order in certain fundamental respects. For instance, whatever is known must be in space and time; there must be causal necessity, quantity, quality, and so on. This was all very well as a framework. But Kant realised that for knowledge considerably more than this is necessary. In nature there are particular causal laws or uniformities which the different sciences investigate. What conditions are necessary or what has to be assured if these uniformities are to be possible? Kant's answer is that you must assume that nature is a purposive system, it is a unified whole in which every part is determined by the Idea or principle of the whole. In short, you must regard nature as a work of art. From here, as is evident, it is an easy step to begin an enquiry into the nature of the beautiful, and into aesthetic judgements, which Kant describes as judgements of taste.

Kant considers artistic creation as a form of purposive activity. Pleasure and pain are associated with success or failure to achieve the goals we try to reach in such activity. But the creation of beauty has no end beyond itself. Never-

theless we take delight in it. The artist does not know what he is doing and cannot explain why he is sometimes successful in creating a genuine work of art and why sometimes he is unsuccessful. Kant contends that we can ascribe beauty both to nature and to works of art.

When we make an aesthetic judgement, when we say something is beautiful, we do not, according to Kant, ascribe a quality to an object. But we indicate that we take delight in the object. Nevertheless, Kant contends that the aesthetic judgement is not purely subjective. It is meaningless to say this picture is beautiful *to me*, though there is no absurdity in saying this picture pleases me. This aspect of Kant's doctrine has been highly controversial and has been variously interpreted by subsequent writers in accordance with their own predilections. A very interesting incidental point which Kant makes is that beauty has meaning only for human beings and for them in so far as they are not merely rational but also irrational at the same time. If man were purely rational he would be content with Reason; it is because he is also partly irrational that he has need of beauty.

When we turn to Hegel, we find that much more rigorously than with Kant, he has a theory of reality which he applies to aesthetics. According to Hegel, the supreme reality is spiritual being or the Absolute Idea, a perfectly harmonious whole, in which each part has meaning or significance only in so far as it can represent the Absolute. The idea of development is an essential part of Hegel's theory. In different spheres of thought, we start with a very vague, or as Hegel says, an abstract idea of the Absolute. These ideas correct themselves through a process of negation which is called dialectic. The later stages in the dialectic represent a truer conception or realisation of the Absolute. Hegel considers

that art is a sensuous representation of the Absolute. It is a lower activity than philosophy or religion since these disciplines can more adequately comprehend the Absolute. In short, art is an attempt to represent God or Reality in tangible form and the more truly you can achieve this representation the higher the artistic achievement.

For Hegel the basic triad is Symbolic Art, Classical Art and Romantic Art. In the early phases of history or pre-history, when man's ideas are very crude, he starts by carving images on stone or wood. These are the beginnings of art; they have merit only as symbols. Later we have the flowering of sculpture. Here the idea of form comes into its own. But the Absolute Idea which is after all spirit, cannot be contained in human or other shape. It must burst through these shackles. And so we get to Romantic Art which is represented in music and poetry. Music and poetry have greater and wider significance than sculpture, but from the point of view of form they are inferior to it.

Under the influence of Kant and Hegel philosophers in the 19th and 20th centuries have contended that the formulation of a definition of art is the chief business of aesthetics. But the point at issue is whether this is the only tradition which is to be found in the history of aesthetics. I shall try to show that there is another tradition equally vigorous and healthy which can be traced back to Plato and Aristotle, in which aesthetic theory kept much closer to the facts and was concerned with raising specific questions about the interpretation and evaluation of particular art-forms.

The points that I am keen to establish are the following. Firstly that Plato did not undertake any general enquiry as to what constitutes a work of art, and secondly when he considers a few art-forms he raises only a limited number of

specific questions about them.

It will be evident to students of the Dialogues that Plato never directly undertakes a general enquiry into the nature of art. Even about the few art-forms which he discusses in his works such as poetry, music and painting, it is only in the case of rhetoric that he seriously attempts a definition. This definition of rhetoric is discussed in the *Gorgias*. But here too Plato is concerned with distinguishing rhetoric from the "art" of the statesman, the physician, the gymnast and the philosopher (dialectic). The basic contention is that rhetoric is a sort of counterfeit whereas genuine persuasion and true belief as to the nature of the good can be provided by the philosopher. The word "art" is being used here, not as fine art, but in a very broad sense to refer to certain practices designed to achieve desirable ends. Successful practice depends on scientific knowledge in all these cases. If persuasion about virtue through words is the genus, then the species are rhetoric and dialectic. So that even in the case of rhetoric, Plato is attempting a definition of it as a sort of craft to convey knowledge of the good not as an example of fine-art. No doubt there is a brief reference to poetry in this dialogue and of its relationship to rhetoric. But this is purely incidental. Poetry is treated as a species of rhetoric; poetry is rhetoric presented through tune, rhythm and metre.

Had Plato been interested in finding a definition of art this could have been done through a comparison of the forms of art which he discusses in various Dialogues, namely, rhetoric, poetry, music and painting. A definition which covered some four or five forms might have been criticised as too narrow. But even the germs of a narrow definition are nowhere to be found in Plato.

Plato was indeed interested in raising specific questions

about some of the arts. There are in fact two fundamental questions. Firstly there is the moral or ethical value of poetry, rhetoric, music, painting, and so on. Shall we, he enquires in the third book of the *Republic*, permit our young guardians to read Homer? The answer, as we know is that Plato finds that in the great epics the gods have been shown to be deceitful and corrupt. Their example cannot but have an evil effect on the young human beings who read and admire the epics. Thus, poetry must be excluded from the education of the guardians and ultimately it is totally bowed out of the ideal state. There is a parallel argument about music. Music, because it is based on harmony, will help to create harmony in the souls of young men. To this extent it is a useful moral instrument. But music can also lead to effeminacy and other evils. So, Plato will permit the use of only certain modes. This question about the value of works of art as moral instruments comes up repeatedly and in different guises in the Dialogues. We may not agree with Plato's answer. We may also think that there are more important questions we should ask about art which Plato never raises. But there would be few who would contend that this question is not worth asking at all.

The second and inter-related question frequently asked by Plato concerns the relationship between certain art-forms and knowledge. The poet delivers himself of metaphysical and ethical judgements in his verse but what is his right to be heard? What are his claims to *know* the truth on these subjects? The answer to this question, as given in the tenth Book of the *Republic* and several other dialogues, is that the poet has few claims to knowledge. His craft is concerned with producing a copy of a copy. Since he *knows* only objects which qualify for a third class in the scheme of reality, he

cannot be expected to give you real knowledge which is about the realm of ideas. From this point of view he ranks lower than craftsmen such as cobblers and carpenters.

This estimate of the poet's claims to knowledge has to be qualified by what Plato has to say in the *Phaedrus*. For when inspired by divine madness, like the madness of love, the poet or the orator can get a glimpse of ideal reality. Poetry which tells us of the truths glimpsed at in such moments of inspiration, is accorded a high value.

If we are looking out not for a definition of art, but for criteria for judging the value of rhetoric and poetry we could indeed claim to have found them with reference to the two questions just mentioned. If poetry, music, etc. have morally beneficial effects, they are valuable. And if poetry and rhetoric give us knowledge (which they generally do not) they are valuable. It could be contended that a third criterion of excellence is also traceable in Plato, a purely aesthetic criterion. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates speaks of the proper relation between the parts of a piece of oratory and in the *Philebus* we are told about the principles of proportion and harmony which are essential to beauty, which is one of the sources of unmixed pleasure. These are rudimentary statements of the idea of configuration or form as a criterion of excellence in the arts.

It may nevertheless be contended that the tenth Book of the *Republic* provides us with a definition of art as such, the definition being that art is imitation. This imitation theory of art is what is ascribed to Plato in the text books. Mr. R. C. Lodge tells us³ that a puzzle dogs the footsteps of all those who seek to understand what Plato has to say about art which arises from this book of the *Republic*. For, while we have here an indictment of art, in the other Dialogues and

in Hellenic theory generally, the artist is inspired and comes upon truths in moments of divine madness. These two views in Plato need not bother us. We have already indicated how the two views can be reconciled.

From our point of view the question at issue is whether imitation, as indicated in this part of the *Republic*, can be a distinguishing characteristic of all works of art. In short, whether Plato is trying to provide us here with a definition of art? In this context Plato chiefly refers to poetry and painting and not to the other arts. But apart from this, he is concerned with distinguishing three classes of creators. These are God, craftsmen and artists of whom he specifically mentions poets and painters. He then goes on to tell us that God alone is a creator, because he creates the form, the ideal bed; craftsmen and artists are not strictly speaking creators but imitators. The artist is worse than the other imitators because he works at two removes. In moments of inspiration described in the *Phaedrus*, the artist remains an imitator but he imitates the form directly and not through a sensuous reproduction. Imitation, therefore, is not something which distinguishes the artist's creation from the creations of other craftsmen. The quality of being a copy applies to all objects other than ideas; it is in no sense a distinguishing characteristic of works of art.

When we turn to Aristotle we find a continuation of Plato's approach, though it is placed on a much more systematic basis. There is a study of particular arts, poetry and rhetoric, but not of art in general. In the *Poetics*, Aristotle says he intends to speak "not only of poetry in general but also of its species and their respective capacities; of the structure of the plot required for a good poem; of the number and nature of its parts; and of related matters." In fact,

however, the *Poetics* furnishes no complete theory even of poetry and it is believed by competent authorities that this is not 'altogether due to the imperfect form in which this treatise has come down to us'. Butcher⁴ warns us that Aristotle has not formulated any theory of the fine arts nor has he marked the organic relation of the arts to one another.

The point which I am trying to emphasise in this very brief survey of the beginnings of aesthetics in the Greeks, is that neither Plato nor Aristotle tried to lay down any definition of art. They were not out to find some characteristics which are common and peculiar to all forms of art. Their chief interest was in poetry and rhetoric and they asked some specific questions about these arts.

This attitude to aesthetics continued down to the 18th and 19th centuries in the works of Vico, Herbert and others. Thus in the case of Vico it is poetry which is the subject of his enquiries. He distinguishes it carefully from philosophy, contending that the two rarely go together. On the other hand in the great epics history and poetry are one. Poetry is likened to science because both deal with the ideal. For Herbert aesthetics must be scientific, it must concern itself with the analysis of particular cases of beauty and register what they reveal.

Our brief glance at the history of aesthetics has shown us that there are at least two different types of enquiry going on. The first type, which is illustrated by Plato and Aristotle is an enquiry into the nature of specific arts. Both of them were mainly interested in poetry. But our two later philosophers Kant and Hegel, were great system-makers and their aesthetic theories were an effort to round off their philosophic systems. It was these philosophers who were responsible for propounding general theories about art and beauty. So

we see that when modern philosophers say that traditional aesthetics is concerned to find a definition which will apply to all the arts, they are making a statement which is only partly true. Not all aesthetics can be described in this way, though it is true that under the influence of Hegel many philosophers in the 19th and 20th centuries have attempted to give us a definition which will apply to all the arts.

The question arises, what is wrong with this attempt to find a definition of art? Partly it is dissatisfaction with the definitions that have so far been found. Neo-positivists say that we can perfectly well recognise works of art when we see or hear them. On the other hand the so-called definitions of philosophers only create a mystery where there is none. For instance if you send a reasonably intelligent man into the Salar Jung Museum in Hyderabad and ask him to separate the works of art from the junk, he will be able to do so with fair success. But on the other hand, suppose you give him instead a definition of art. You say, "Please bring out every work which exhibits significant form." Or suppose you say, if you are a follower of Croce, "Please separate from the rest every work which is a genuine expression." In what way would this help your friend? The linguistic analyst school of philosophers tends to think that these definitions would not help at all. Our friend who entered the Salar Jung Museum on such an assignment would be so confused by the definition that it would be almost impossible for him to distinguish genuine works of art from the rest.

This is an argument which is fashionable these days but seems to me to be over-rated. The fact is that common sense can take you a long way in settling practical problems. Where it does not help is in the border line cases. This is where the problem arises and it is the need for consistency which

creates the problem. No doubt you could shut your mind to this problem and there would be no aesthetics. But then there need not be physics or biology or any of the other sciences.

It has been argued that aesthetic criteria are not genuine; they are purely verbal and are for this reason irrefutable and useless. This is, however, quite a different argument. I might agree that the criteria mentioned above are purely verbal. But from this it would not follow that others could not be found.

It may be argued that dissatisfaction with aesthetics is not just that philosophers in the past have not succeeded in finding a definition of art. The neo-positivist contention seems to be that this search for a definition of art involves some sort of an absurdity. This difficulty is expressed by saying that philosophers are looking for something which is not there — like looking for the equator. Of course this business of looking for the equator does not seem absurd to me, provided you know what you are looking for and in what shape you expect to find it. In the school text books the equator is described as an imaginary line round the earth's surface. So, if you are making your first sea voyage from Japan to Australia and are rather excited at the thought of crossing the equator and closely follow the ship's bearings, I do not suppose you would be doing anything to fit you for the lunatic asylum. Or again if a school teacher, indicating a globe, says to some unfortunate school boy "Find the equator", I do not suppose anyone would think he was giving an absurd order. So I feel that even if asking for a definition of art is like asking some one to find the equator, it is not therefore an absurd request. At least as far as I can make out there is no logical contradiction involved in asking

for a definition of art.

But it might be contended nevertheless that to ask such a question is absurd from an empirical point of view. For instance this would be so if I knew in advance that there are no characteristics which are both common and peculiar to all works of art. How can I come by such information? I think there are two ways in which any one could claim such knowledge.

Firstly, if I know some empirical fact about a work of art or about some works of art, which would exclude the possibility of a definition of art then I could be said to know that such a definition is impossible. For instance I could say it is absurd to look for Mr. X in the verandah. I could argue like this. Mr. X is now in this room. One person cannot be in two places at the same time. Therefore, Mr. X cannot be in the verandah at present. It is absurd for anyone to look for Mr. X in the verandah. But the question is, do we have some empirical knowledge about a work of art, which excludes the possibility of a definition of art? It has been argued by some people, that each work of art is unique and individual; that is the essence of it. If you seek to explain the value of any work of art in terms of some general principles then you are destroying that value. As Stuart Hampshire puts it, "you need recipes or guiding principles where you need repetition. To copy a right action is to act rightly; but a copy of a work of art is not necessarily or generally a work of art". In short, "to move from the particular to the general is in aesthetics, a step in the wrong direction".

Now it seems to me that Mr. Stuart Hampshire and others of his persuasion are proving the very opposite of what they set out to do. For, without much ado, they have themselves come out with a far-reaching generalisation about works of

art. While contending that works of art have nothing in common, Mr Hampshire has declared that genuine works of art have a very important feature in common, namely, that they are individual and unique. Mr Hampshire has also said that a work of art is something which is created not as an answer to a problem, nor to serve some practical end, but as it were, gratuitously. This is one reason which he gives in favour of the view that you cannot have common standards to evaluate works of art. I shall examine this contention in detail shortly. For the time being I merely emphasise the point that Mr. Hampshire says that a work of art is unique, it is not an answer to a problem, and is gratuitous—a sort of luxury divorced from all practical ends. These are important criteria which can help us to distinguish works of art from other objects though Mr. Hampshire wants to deny that traditional philosophers have discovered just such distinguishing characters. Moreover, these generalisations are not revolutionary. These very propositions are put forward by Frederick Schiller and adherents of the play theory of art, a thoroughly respectable and traditional type of aesthetic theory.

We could sum up by saying that there is no empirical fact about a work of art which would exclude the possibility of a definition of works of art.

Secondly, it may be argued that we have examined all works of art and through analysis we have separated out and named their constituent elements or qualities. We have found that those qualities or elements which are common to works of art are also found to qualify other things which are not art objects. These qualities, therefore, cannot help us to distinguish art from non-art. Again, whenever we come across a quality which does not characterise any non-art

objects we also find that it does not characterise some genuine art objects. Such a quality, therefore, cannot provide us with a distinguishing characteristic since its range of applicability is not wide enough. It excludes too much. This is the type of argument which would have to be produced. It is essentially an inductive argument based on simple enumeration and it can be seen that it would be very difficult indeed to ensure the validity of the premises involved.

But this would not be all. There is one other premise which would be essential to the argument if it is to be conclusive. We would have to be in a position to say about each art object separately that A, B, C, etc., are the constituent elements or qualities of the object and *there are no other elements*. This last assertion is crucial. Because if we did not know that each analysis of every art object is a *complete* analysis we could never be sure that further analysis would not reveal the common and peculiar qualities which the traditional aesthetic philosopher is in search of. I do not think I need say more to show that we have little or no empirical grounds to contend that philosophers who set out to search for a definition of art are doing something absurd.

Thus I am not able to agree with the neo-positivists in their contention that to search for a definition of art or for criteria which will distinguish works of art from other things, is an absurd or impossible quest. On the other hand, I do tend to agree with them in holding that little purpose is served by speculative aesthetic theories such as those of Hegel. The statement "art is the Idea clothed in sensuous form" may have some appeal as a piece of rhetoric but in no way does it enlighten the intellect. In place of the formulation of broad generalisations, I suggest that aesthetics

would do better to start by exploring the more obvious similarities (and differences) between related arts. The idea of form, for instance, seems to be common to all the arts, but it needs careful definition. In mathematics and logic we have the notion of order. Are these two notions, form and order, identical and if not, then in what way is form differentiated from the notion of order? Again we speak frequently of aesthetic qualities, such as the rhythm of a painting, or of the texture of music. What are we talking about when we make these statements? Aesthetics would be less of a jungle than it is if we took the trouble to define our terms. A crucial dividing line between the arts is provided by language. There is thus a vital difference between literature and the other arts. By language I mean here conventional language, not language in the sense in which some philosophers have described all art as language. In literature, wherever language comes in, the artist is making assertions either direct or implied. If this is so we are bound to enquire whether these assertions are trivial or important, true or false. Our decision on these points is bound to affect our evaluation of such works of art. On the other hand in arts such as painting and music the question of truth is just irrelevant; it simply does not arise. I feel that a critical aesthetics such as I am advocating must follow up detailed lines of comparison and differentiation in the allied arts — rather as Aristotle did in his *Poetics*. When such data has been collected there will be some basis to venture on the broader generalisations so dear to the philosophic temperament.

There is, however, one important point on which I must be careful to dissociate myself from neo-positivists. These philosophers believe that there cannot be any evaluation in

aesthetics, or at any rate there cannot be any fixed criteria for evaluating works of art. Criteria can be adopted but they are purely conventional. Judging pictures, as one of these writers has said, is rather like judging a dog show.⁵ The Kennel Club lays down certain criteria for evaluating dogs of different breeds and the judges merely apply them. There is no reason or ground for preferring cocker spaniels with docked tails to those whose tails have not been so treated. It is just a convention that for a cocker not to have its tail docked is a fault. A similar situation obtains when it comes to judging paintings, except that the art critics usually do not have their criteria tabulated in the cut and dried form as judges in dog shows. In the case of art critics it is, I suppose, a combination of persuasion and bluff which gets them on to the committees which award prizes at exhibitions!

I said just now that in literature the question of truth cannot be ignored, but in other arts it is irrelevant. To this extent I agree that there may be criteria for evaluation which apply in some arts but not in others. Scales of evaluation would apply in similar arts or in associated groups of arts, and there may not be much point in trying to compare works of art which are evaluated in different scales. Nevertheless even here one could say that Epstein was a greater artist than W. H. Auden, meaning thereby that he ranked higher as a sculptor than Auden as a poet; for, to revert to the Dog Show analogy, there *is* a prize offered for the best specimen in the show.

The question of evaluation in aesthetics is, however, a complicated one and requires careful examination. The neo-positivists who contend that evaluation is entirely impossible in aesthetics have explored the analogy between aesthetics

and ethics with this object in view. In an article entitled "Logic and Appreciation" included in the volume *Language and Aesthetics* Mr. Stuart Hampshire contends that "aesthetic judgements are not comparable in purpose with moral judgements and there are no problems of aesthetics comparable with the problems of ethics".⁶ Mr. Hampshire has trenchantly summed up the neo-positivists' case and his article therefore provides a convenient reference for discussing the relationship of these two disciplines from the view-point of this school.

Let us then begin with the comparison of moral and aesthetic problems.

It is well-known that the neo-positivists regard moral problems as unavoidable. Thus for instance R. M. Hare in his *The Language of Morals*,⁷ writes "...the question: 'what shall I do?' is one that we cannot for long evade; the problems of conduct, though sometimes less diverting than crossword puzzles, *have to be solved*, in a way that crossword puzzles do not". And as the author tells us "the function of moral principles is to guide choice". Mr. Hampshire says "Action in response to any moral problem is not gratuitous; it is imposed; that there should be some response is absolutely necessary... When there are unavoidable problems a rational man looks for some general methods of solving them; ... Unless general methods of solution are recognised there can be no grounds for distinguishing a valid from an invalid step in any argument in support of any solution. To be irrational is either to have no reasons at all for preferring one solution to another, or to give utterly different reasons in different cases of the same type". On the other hand, Hampshire contends, "A work of art is gratuitous. It is not essentially the answer to a question or the solution of a

presented problem... The artist has the technical problem of the medium in which he works.... As an artist he has his own conception of what his work has to be; clearly or confusedly he has set his own end before himself... He has therefore created his own technical problems; they have not been presented to him; they arise out of his own conception of what he is to do".

At this point two questions arise. Firstly, is the distinction between avoidable and unavoidable problems valid?, and secondly, is it the case that the rational man will frame principles for the solution of problems only when confronted with unavoidable problems but will not require any principles when faced with avoidable problems?

ARE MORAL PROBLEMS UNAVOIDABLE?

The neo-positivists seem to suggest that in daily life from the moment of waking we are continually, or at any rate frequently, at the cross roads. We have to choose one road or the other; even to sit and do nothing is to take some decision. As Hampshire puts it, "one cannot pass by a situation; one must pass through it in one way or the other". It seems to me false that situations are thrust on us, as if from the outside and the individual is then forced to make a choice. The individual's desires, needs, objectives and state of knowledge are partly responsible for the creation of the situation. How indeed does a "situation" arise? To start with there must be an objective. Suppose I wish to visit my friend who is in distress. Then a situation arises if there is a difficulty in achieving the end—either due to insufficient information or due to physical factors. For instance, having set out, at a certain point I may not know whether I should take the turning to the right or to the left.

But if I knew in advance that the turning to the right is the correct road, I would not be faced with a "situation" at the cross roads. Or again, supposing my friend's house was at quite a distance and I found that I had a corn on my foot which made walking rather painful. I might then be faced with a "situation"—of finding some transport to take me to my friend's house. But the point which I want to emphasise is that the mere existence of cross roads or the corn on my foot do not in themselves create a situation for me. The situation can only arise if there is an objective and a simple way of avoiding a particular situation is to abandon the objective which gave rise to it; in this way we obviously do bypass situations in every day life.

Now I am not trying to contend that human beings do not have to take some decisions in the course of their lives and I am not maintaining that a person can avoid all problems. Nor am I contending that it is as easy to avoid one problem as it is to avoid another. But I am contending, with regard to any particular problem, that one essential factor which gives rise to it is an objective which some one or other sets out to achieve. You can avoid that particular problem by abandoning the objective. In this respect moral problems are no different from any others, political, scientific, logical or aesthetic. If India wants to conserve her foreign exchange for industrialisation, certain problems arise; how to make up the shortfall in food, how to satisfy the upper classes who have become used to imported luxury articles, etc. We can avoid these problems by giving up the policy of industrialisation; which is not to say that other policies would not give rise to their own problems. Copernicus too chose his own problem; if he had not hankered after simplicity and a more harmonious mathematical order the Ptole-

maic system would have sufficed and the terrors of the Inquisition need not have arisen. So also with genuinely moral problems, for instance the following: a Muslim in an Islamic society is permitted by law to have four wives. So, if he is getting tired of his first wife, he can promptly acquire a second and there need be no moral problem for him. But if he has started thinking that monogamy is more in keeping with the equal rights of men and women then indeed there will be a moral problem for him. Here again he has created his own problem; he has chosen it. In fact every problem implies an "if"; it is a sort of hypothetical imperative. Mr. Hampshire puts the case admirably when he says of the artist that he sets himself his own problem and this, I contend, is true not only of the artist but also of the moral agent, the scientist and the philosopher.

We see then that there is no valid distinction between avoidable and unavoidable problems.

ARE PRINCIPLES REQUIRED ONLY IN RESPECT OF AVOIDABLE PROBLEMS?

It seems to me evident that if a person ever sets out to solve a problem of any kind whatever he should tackle it in precisely the way in which Mr. Hampshire suggests that he would tackle an unavoidable problem. Mr. Hampshire's problem in his essay, *Logic and Appreciation*, would on his classification surely rank as an avoidable problem and yet I find that he has tried to produce some reason for accepting the solution that there is no such subject as aesthetics. Further, it appears to me that he has tried to argue that moral and aesthetic judgements are not solutions to problems of the same type and are therefore not comparable. In this respect his own practice gives the lie to the theory he

has propounded in these very pages, though he might have helped us more if he had told us what he means by two problems being of different types.

It seems to me that at the bottom of the suggestion that rational behaviour is apposite only in the face of unavoidable problems, there lies a strange and insupportable premise. It is the supposition that if you set your own problem, you are free to deal with it as you choose. Here the neo-positivists would probably draw an analogy between art and a private game, like the games which a girl may play with her dolls. There are no rules in such a game, as there are in tennis, and if there are any they are shared only between the child and her dolls. But this analogy I suggest is a false one and is no more applicable to works of art than it applies to any intellectual discipline whether it be science or history. In regard to art it is true that every artist desires that his creation will be understood and appreciated by others; I do not say that the desire to communicate is the sole motivating force in artistic creation but I do contend that it is at least a subsidiary factor. I state this purely as an historical fact. The moment the question of understanding arises, even if the artist is to understand his own work, then it follows that every work must display *some* logic. This is a question which is very relevant to our time when poets and novelists (not to mention philosophers) have broken away from conventional forms. This in its turn has led to an increasing need for the critic and the growing importance of his role. In place of the generalised forms, of which we could all gain some understanding in school, we need now to understand the inner logic of say, the novels of James Joyce. Without a key to this inner logic these novels must appear as they did to no less a writer than Forster, as "fantasy" or

"a dogged attempt to cover the universe with mud". Once this inner logic is made evident, the work no longer remains mere fantasy; we see that it follows a pattern. This shows that the work of art cannot be purely arbitrary. It is bound by what Hampshire, in the passage quoted earlier, describes as the artist's conception of what his own work is to be and the technical problems of the medium in which he works.

ARE MORAL PROBLEMS PURELY REPETITIONS?
ARE ARTISTIC PROBLEMS WHOLLY UNIQUE?

Before leaving the comparison of moral and aesthetic problems, I must consider Hampshire's contention that "Virtue and good conduct are essentially repeatable and imitable, in a sense in which a work of art is not. To copy a right action is to act rightly; but a copy of a work of art is not necessarily or generally a work of art".

The neo-positivists take the view that the consequences of an act have to be taken into consideration in judging whether it is good or right. That being the case, it is difficult to see how on their premises, it can be argued that virtue could be a matter of imitation—a position which might be maintained with more plausibility by those who support a theory like Kant's Categorical Imperative. The neo-positivists also hold that moral principles are necessary because we do not ever know the total consequences of our actions. In order to take a decision, Hare points out we need a major premise, which is a moral principle such for instance as "Never (except in self-defence) kill another human being"; a minor premise which must be purely a factual statement, viz. "If I do not kill him now he will kill me"; and from these the conclusion follows: "It is right for me to kill X now". Much knowledge and discrimination is required in

arriving at the minor (factual) premise and this is perhaps where moral decisions most frequently go wrong. Be that as it may, my purpose is chiefly to point out that on this theory virtue cannot be looked at as imitation of some fixed archetype.

On the other hand, concerning aesthetic problems, my purpose is to show that they are not as individual and unique as Hampshire wishes to suggest.

Artistic problems do not arise in a vacuum. The work of his predecessors or contemporaries suggests problems to every artist and outside its historical context much of the significance of any work of art would be lost. In this respect the history of art presents parallels with that of science. There could no more have been a Gallileo without Kepler and Copernicus before him than there would have been Dylan Thomas without Auden and Hopkins. As Hopkins puts it: "Every true poet, I thought, must be original and originality a condition of poetic genius; so that each poet is like a species in nature (not in *individuum genericum* or *specificum*) and can never recur. That nothing should be old or borrowed, however, cannot be."

Before concluding the comparison of moral and aesthetic problems it is important to draw attention to the following: the moral agent faces a problem; his problem is to do something and he has to choose between alternative courses of action. The problem for the casuist, the teacher or adviser (a role which we all have to play some time as parents and friends) is a different problem from that faced by the moral agent. The adviser's problem is to help the agent to see the moral principles implied and the probable consequences of different courses of action. By distinguishing and clarifying the alternative courses of action, he can

best help the agent to choose. But the adviser or teacher's function is also that of appraisal—to judge in respect of past actions—whether they are worthy of being commended or condemned. Ethics functions at a high level of abstraction and the problems of the moral philosopher are entirely different from those of the casuist and the moral agent. With their emphasis on ethics as a practical science, the neo-positivists have stated the central problem of ethics to be the attempt to answer the question: What shall I do? And they have suggested as Hampshire continually does, that the function of ethics is to “frame rules of conduct”, to provide “recipes” for right action. As a result they tended to slur over these differences—the differences in the functions of the moral agent, the moral adviser and the moral philosopher.

More recently, however, neo-positivists are beginning to recognise these differences and Mr. Hartland Swann in his book *An Analysis of Morals* (1959) makes a useful distinction between moral problems (the problems of the agent) and problems *in* morals. He says: “The moral philosopher on the other hand, is not concerned to do anything in the strictly practical sense at all; nor is he concerned to pass judgement or act as a critic of himself or others. He is concerned primarily to discover the logical significance of the concepts used and how sentences embodying moral problems are related to or differ from sentences embodying non-moral problems”.

In the domain of aesthetics we may have comparably, the artist whose problem is to produce something; the critic whose function is appraisal, and finally the philosopher of art whose function is wholly theoretical; viz. the discovery of aesthetic principles or as the neo-positivists might say, to discover the logical significance of the concepts used and

how sentences embodying aesthetic problems (the problems of the artist) are related to or differ from sentences embodying non-aesthetic problems.

MORAL AND AESTHETIC JUDGEMENTS

Hampshire, following the earlier neo-positivists' view of ethics, has tended to treat commands as the model of ethical judgements in general. He is quite right in stating that an aesthetic judgement is not a command. It is not the function of the art critic to prescribe rules or to tell the artist what he ought to do in the future. What this amounts to, however, is the assertion that there is no equivalent concept in aesthetics to the moral concept "ought". On this point I do not think there are many who would disagree with him.

When we come to the concept *right*, the situation does not seem to be as clear as it is in the case of "ought". When we speak of *right*, we say in relation to the past, that such and such an action taken by X was not the right thing for him to do. Is there a parallel usage in aesthetics? It seems to me that there is. When Bridges talked of certain faults in Hopkins' work, offences against taste, the use of sensuous imagery in dealing with religious subjects, one could say that what he meant was, that it was not right, aesthetically, for Hopkins to do these things. And I think that where 'right' means 'fitting' it is clear that this concept applies equally to ethics and aesthetics at least so far as we may be called upon to pass judgement on past actions or on existing works of art. But where the future is concerned there seems to be a difference. It has been pointed out that one difference between our usage of good and right is, that, whereas we speak of a good man, a good act, the definite article is always used with right, e.g. "*the* right thing for you

to do", "the right man for this job". Thus when with reference to the future we say, "the right thing for you to do is X", there seems to be no parallel usage in aesthetics. That this is so, is perhaps just another way of saying that the concept 'ought' has no equivalent in aesthetics; for the right thing for you to do is what you ought to do.

There remains, however, the term "good" and judgements which embody it. It seems to me that this concept is applicable both to ethics and aesthetics. The neo-positivists distinguish between the evaluative and descriptive meaning of good. The evaluative meaning of good is simply that you commend something, whereas the descriptive meaning is provided by the criteria on the basis of which you make your evaluative judgement. For if you commend something, it is as they contend, always reasonable to ask for the grounds on which you do so. It appears to me that these statements of the neo-positivists in respect of good, apply equally in ethics and aesthetics.

The neo-positivists contend that the ethical judgement always implies comparison; without comparison there cannot be choice, and comparison is itself not possible unless there are common criteria. But in aesthetics Hampshire holds that no such comparison on the basis of common criteria is possible. He states, "An aesthetic judgement has to point to the arrangement of elements, and to show what constitutes the originality of the arrangement of elements in this particular case; what one calls originality in one case may bear little analogy to originality found elsewhere; for there was no common problem to be solved and the achievements were essentially different" (p.168). He says elsewhere that if one tries to show that a particular work of art is good *because* it possesses certain qualities which are the

hallmark of aesthetic value, this actually diverts one's attention away from the work we set out to appreciate.

I quite agree with Hampshire when he emphasises that the first step towards appreciating a work of art is to discover its various qualities: we must, for example, become aware of and hear the music of Hopkins' "*The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*". We must notice the concrete vividness achieved by hyphenated noun-compounds as in "the wimple-water-dimple, not-by-morning-matched face" — its other qualities of syntax and diction. We must appreciate its thought and emotional context and then we must see how all those elements are so closely woven together to produce a unique and beautiful poem. This primary function of the critic I would describe as interpretation but it is closely bound up with, and leads logically, to the next function, namely evaluation. In fact my concluding remark about Hopkins' poem is evaluative. I want to contend that Hampshire, in the passage quoted above, himself makes a statement which implies the evaluative function just when he is denying this role to the critic "..... to show what constitutes the originality of the arrangement of elements in this particular case". How indeed is any one to show that the arrangement of elements in "*The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo*" is original? You can obviously only do this, as in fact Mr. W. H. Gardner⁸ has done, by pointing out that while many of the elements can be found in Shakespeare, Spencer, Keats, Tennyson and Meredith, these devices were put to different and more telling use by Hopkins. It is meaningless to say that something is original without comparing it with others. Only by comparing and contrasting do we develop the capacity of discrimination and this surely is the essence of awareness — aesthetic, moral or any other. Incidentally, in picking out the "arrangement of

elements" for special attention, Hampshire has unwittingly shown his adherence to the organic theory of art.

There remains then the basic contention of the neo-positivists that ethical judgements are essentially related to choice. If it is a good thing for me to lie in bed, it is so because the other alternative, say going to the office, is not so good — if not positively bad. But in aesthetics it has been contended that no question of choice arises. If you admire Dryden and Pope you do not, therefore, have to refuse to read Wordsworth and Shelley.

It is, of course, true that if I am considering a worthwhile way of spending an evening and I decide to see a film, I shall exclude the possibility of studying philosophy. So I need an evaluative judgement, or several of them, to guide my choice — I will need some factual judgements also. But in the same way if I want an evening of aesthetic enjoyment I must decide, say, between Keats and Keble. Aesthetic judgements would certainly help me to choose between them.

It is not very clear, therefore, how moral and aesthetic judgements differ in their application to these two cases. Be that as it may, it seems to me that the neo-positivists place too much emphasis on the fact of physical exclusion as the essence of choice. On the other hand, I would like to draw attention to the logical implications of choice. When I choose one course of action in preference to another, it means that I accept certain principles and I deny others which are its logical contraries. If I, through my actions, show my acceptance of one set of principles today, and then tomorrow act in a way which would show my adherence to a contrary set of principles, then my actions contradict each other; I cannot be considered moral from any point of view. If I choose to admire one type of poetry, I am, it is true, not physi-

cally debarred from choosing to admire another kind of poetry which has just the opposite qualities. But then, thereby, I shall only be showing that I have no settled standards as a critic.

The main points which I have tried to urge in this chapter are as follows: (i) The history of aesthetics shows that while the earlier philosophers dealt with questions relating to particular arts, later philosophers tried to provide a definition of art and to fit their aesthetics into a general theory of reality; (ii) While I do not agree with the linguistic analysts that to seek for a definition of art is an absurdity, I agree that it would be more worthwhile to raise questions about particular or related arts and to analyse certain basic conceptions which seem to apply to the arts. In this respect I suggest a return to the earlier tradition of the Greek philosophers; (iii) Finally I have suggested that evaluation is both possible and essential for aesthetics. The creative artist chooses a problem and a work of art is an attempt to solve this problem. In these respects the moral agent and the artist face a similar situation. Discrimination and comparison which are essential to evaluation in ethics are also entirely appropriate in aesthetics.

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Chapter II

THE ART OBJECT AND HOW YOU KNOW IT

Aesthetics has to perform two functions, which may be described as interpretative and evaluative. In the last chapter we have dealt with the main objections which have been raised against the possibility of evaluation in aesthetics. Before we can decide on the value of a work of art, whether we are going to describe it as a masterpiece or a mediocre work, we must know *what* the work is. We must in some sense be able to understand it and ascertain correctly what aesthetic qualities it possesses. Critics are in the habit of using strange words to describe the aesthetic qualities of works of art, almost as if they were motivated by a perverse desire to confuse and perplex those whom it is their business to enlighten. Thus the critics will speak of colour and texture in music and rhythm in painting, importing into one art the qualities apposite to the other. Suppose nevertheless that a critic were to remark of a Moghul miniature "the painting has great depth" or were to speak of the "spatial rhythm" of a landscape in the Bengal school. Whatever we mean by depth, I think we would all agree that he was assigning quali-

ties to the paintings which they did not *really* possess. The evaluative judgements of such a person could be dismissed. We would say that he had not even understood or appreciated the works of art correctly and therefore had no right to pass judgement. I want here to examine some of the basic problems which arise in understanding or getting to know a work of art.

The answer to the question, how can I or how do I get to know a work of art, will depend at least partly on the nature of works of art. So we will have first to deal with the question: What is the art object? You might be inclined to answer that it is the poem, or the painting or the piece of music or whatever it is. This answer will not satisfy me. For instance, let us take Beethoven's Violin Concerto in D Major. Is the music the written score? I think that you will answer that the written score is not Beethoven's Violin Concerto; that the art object in this case is the actual sound we hear when it is being rendered by a soloist and an orchestra. But what happens when the last chord is struck? Would you say that there is no such art object as Beethoven's Violin Concerto? Contrast the case of music with a painting. Here we find that the actual canvas on which the painter worked is taken in ordinary parlance as *the* work of art. We speak of "reproductions" of the work. The original has a unique significance, reflected among other things in the disparity of the market prices of originals and reproductions. When you look at a painting common-sense would say, you are looking at the work of art, for instance, the Madonna and Child of Giotto. But when you are looking at the score of Beethoven's Violin Concerto you are perceiving only a transcription or a recording or a symbol of the work of art. Poetry seems to lie midway between these two. The scrap of paper on which a poet scribbled the first draft of a poem is of

interest to the collector. It has sentimental and psychological significance. Some times a critic may be interested in trying to understand the thought processes of the poet and from this point of view note books and papers are of value. No one would say, however, that the poem, as written in the hand of the poet, is in any way an *original*, as we say of the painter's canvas. But is the printed poem on all fours with the musical score?

Broadly speaking philosophers have found three different types of answers to the difficulties illustrated in the examples cited. These theories are :

(i) *The Solipsistic Theory*: A view, which I shall refer to as the solipsistic view of the art object, is that each individual *creates* the work of art for himself. The painting on the canvas is no more a work of art than is the musical score. These are mainly the stimuli which set off the process of artistic creation in the mind of the observer.

(ii) *The Croce-Collingwood Theory*: A variation of the solipsistic theory is the one propounded by Benedetto Croce and R. G. Collingwood. According to these philosophers the work of art is an experience in the mind of the artist who created it. The function of the observer is to *re-create* for himself an experience approximating to the experience of the original creator. In so far as he succeeds in doing so, the observer can be said to know a particular work of art. The similarities and differences between the Solipsistic and Croce-Collingwood theories will be brought out later. Broadly speaking they agree on the thesis that a work of art is an experience in the mind of some individual.

(iii) *The Common-Sense View*: The third view, that of common-sense, is that the work of art exists independently of the observer. In order to appreciate a work of art one must

get to know and understand it. Interpretation means, in effect, discovery.

I propose to examine in detail the relationship between the physical stimuli and the work of art with special reference to poetry. One reason for choosing poetry is that when we want to interpret or discuss the interpretation of a poem we do so in conventional language. The fact that this discussion is in prose will of course give rise to difficulties. But these difficulties are nothing in comparison with the difficulties which arise when a critic starts talking about a painting or about music. And the reason for this is easy to understand. Poetry and prose have at least conventional language in common; they are in the same medium. Translation of the poem into prose for purposes of exposition can be done less inadequately than translation from a totally different medium such as line or colour. What I have to say in regard to poetry may apply only with variations to the other arts.

What then is the poem?

The words are essential to the poem, but the poem is more than the words. We must remember that words themselves have, from the point of view of the appreciator, at least two aspects which are important in our apprehension of poetry—verbal shape, the printed word and verbal sound, the word as heard. A poem has to be considered from both these points of view. Swinburne, for instance, must be *heard* and so must most other poets. On the other hand, print can help us to see the verbal shape of the poem, not otherwise easily evident, as for instance, Dylan Thomas' *Prologue* to his readers in his *Collected Poems*. This poem of one hundred lines is divided in two halves. The fiftieth line of the first half rhymes with the first line of the second half, the 49th with the 2nd and so on, the last line of the poem rhyming with the

first. Intricate verbal patterns of this kind are characteristic of many modern poems, especially those of W. H. Auden. But verbal shape is only important because it reflects a metrical scheme. Certain 17th century poems written in the shapes of hearts and crosses are examples of ingenuity carried to absurd lengths — none of these poems are remembered for genuine poetic merit.

Then, to get nearer to the heart of the poem, there is its meaning. Dr. Richards tells us that the meaning of a poem is also a complex business and is made up of four aspects. First, there is what he calls the plain sense of the poem. This is what is explained to us in the class room when poetry is being *taught*. Though we may scoff at this it is very important. Dr. Richards in his *Practical Criticism*¹ has pointed out that in a very large number of cases when readers fail to appreciate a poem, one reason is that they have not succeeded in making out its prose sense.

Then we come to feeling—the feeling of the poem. It is a little difficult to explain what is meant by the feeling of a poem because the word ‘feeling’ is a sort of omnibus which is used in a large variety of senses. Ryle has distinguished no less than seven senses of the verb ‘to feel’—for example, ‘I felt a tooth-ache’, ‘I felt a tickle’, ‘I felt as if the rope was already round my neck’, ‘I felt for the two-anna bit which had found its way into the seam of my coat’. A more important use from the poet’s point of view is when we say: ‘I felt that...’. Wordsworth says:

‘And I have felt

A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime...’

How feelings are expressed in works of art and how they

are evoked by them is discussed in detail in a subsequent chapter. Here suffice it to say that feelings enter into poetry in two main ways. For instance, we talk of Shelley's 'Adonais' as a poem about grief, the grief which Shelley felt at Keats' death. In the same way, we talk about love poems and so on. Instances of this kind are covered by the statement: poetry is an expression of emotion. But poems not only express emotion, they are also intended to evoke it through the building up of an emotive atmosphere, a mood. Take such words as 'magnificent', 'sublime', 'awe-inspiring', 'wonderful', 'sunny', 'warm', and so on. Do these words refer to a quality in the object described? Frequently the poet is only using these words to produce what some philosophers have called, 'pro' feelings towards the object. There are 'con' words just as there are 'pro' words. There is an aura round words so that when we talk about the feeling of a poem we are thinking of these subtle pro or con feelings which the poet is arousing in us. Consider the following lines from Francis Thompson's 'Daisy':

'She looked a little wistfully,
Then went her sunshine way :—
The sea's eye had a mist on it,
And the leaves fell from the day.'

When we talk of the *feeling* of a poem, we are thinking of all these nuances, these subtle insinuations which make it a delicately poised and individual object. Richards goes on to speak of tone as the third factor contributing to the meaning of a poem. This is the attitude of the poet to his audience. The example of tone which Richards gives is that of a person making a speech. For instance, an aspiring young philosopher is addressing the Aristotelian Society in London: he will be

highly impersonal, cautious and deferential. On the other hand, a person preaching a sermon tends to speak down to his audience. He is the one who knows; he speaks with authority. Personally my suspicion is that Richards' distinction between *feeling* and *tone* is a distinction without a difference. At any rate *tone*, whatever it is, is very subtle and is not always easy to lay one's finger on. But perhaps Wordsworth is being a trifle superior when he speaks of 'the still sad music of humanity' which he finds in nature. You will find it too, he seems to say, provided you take nature as seriously as he does. Or again, we have a note of banter in Day Lewis' parody of Marlowe's 'Come live with me and be my love'. In place of the romantic pleasures which the pastoral lover had to offer the lover today can only say:

'Come live with me and be my love
And we will all the pleasures prove,
Of peace and plenty, bed and board,
That chance employment may afford.'

Finally we come to what Richards describes as intention. By this is meant the poet's aims or objectives, conscious or unconscious, the effect which he is endeavouring to achieve. "Unless we know what he is trying to do, we can hardly estimate the measure of his success". This is a point we will have to consider later in some detail.

Let me then recapitulate. The poem has to be interpreted. We have to become aware of its shape and sound, and we have to get clear about its meaning, and the meaning as we have just seen, is a complex affair. Richards describes this by saying that the poem exists in the reading of it. This reading of the poem is rather like a rendering of Beethoven's Violin Concerto.

These considerations may lead us to the view that the poem has to be *created* or *recreated* from the bare bones which are the words of the poem. As I have mentioned earlier, we may adopt the Solipsistic view. Readings of the poem vary from individual to individual. There is in fact no such thing as 'the poem'. For instance, when we speak of Keats' *Ode to the Nightingale*, this is merely a convenient label for a class of objects, the class formed by verbal shapes and noises which closely resemble each other. An important consequence of this view is that when I say, "Keats' *Ode to the Nightingale* is a good poem", I am making a statement about my reading of it, and when you say the opposite you are not contradicting me because you are talking about something quite different, namely, *your* reading of the poem. And since there is no such thing as *the* poem, there cannot be any arguments in literary criticism.

The solipsistic view of the art object is in fact, quite commonly held. Many of the critics who hold it do not seem to realise that if they were to be consistent they should cease to write literary criticism. I shall try to show that the solipsistic view is unjustified by comparing it with the Croce-Collingwood theory which I propose to present more fully. Meanwhile, I might mention that on this theory not only would our art and literary critics be thrown out of commission—it would have the same effect upon those who teach poetry.

Croce and Collingwood share with the solipsists the view that the poem is not out there on the printed page. They contend that what we call *the* poem or the art object is an imaginative experience which exists in the mind of the poet. To examine this view it is necessary to explain Collingwood's theory of artistic creation. For according to him the process

of creation cannot be separated from the finished product, the work of art.

Collingwood tells us that before an artist creates or a poet writes he has a feeling of intense uneasiness. If you say he is subject to emotion or feeling that would not be quite accurate, because the poet cannot tell you what he is feeling; he is in a state of emotional confusion. In this situation the artist picks up his brush or his instrument or gets hold of pen and ink. In trying to give expression to his vague and undefined emotion, he discovers it. And in discovering himself or in realising this experience, he creates a language. According to Collingwood, 'art is language'; and Croce says 'art is expression'.

It is worth emphasising the following points in this theory. Firstly, the poet does not know beforehand what he is going to write. He discovers the poem in the creation of it. Secondly, the act of communication is incidental to artistic creation. The poet has, as it were, a soliloquy, and what he permits you to do is to eavesdrop on him. Subsequently he may write out his poem and publish it but the point is that a poet does not write *for* an audience. Communication occurs, because the poet is after all a social being, and what he thinks and feels will not be so very different from the experience of other individuals in his time.

So in short, for Croce and Collingwood the poem is not a particular set of words written or recited. The poem is an experience, an imaginative expression of emotion in the mind of the poet. When therefore, you read the words, they may help you to recreate the poem. You will be aware of the poem to the extent to which you recreate in your own mind the experience of the poet. That experience is the poem.

The main criticism which is brought against this theory,

especially by those who support the solipsistic view, is to contend that in fact it is reducible to it. It has all the drawbacks of the solipsistic theory, and a few more of its own. The solipsists admit, and embrace the fact that each reader creates a different poem; there is, according to them no such thing as *the* poem. It is all very well, the solipsists would say to talk about *the* poem in the mind of the poet. But how is anyone to know what is in the poet's mind? The poet himself cannot tell you what was in his mind. If he wants to, he can only repeat the words of the poem. The poem, they contend, is a closely organised whole, an organic unity will all its parts interlocked. If you disturb one part, if you change one word, you change the whole. As Coleridge said, "Whatever lines can be translated into other words of the same language without diminution of their significance, either in sense of association or in any worthy feeling, are so far vicious in their diction".

There is no doubt a germ of truth in this contention which every teacher of poetry and every art critic (even the most gifted of them) will realise. But I want to show in some detail that the case has been grossly overstated.

To begin with, let me admit that the poem is untranslatable. It is true that you cannot explain exactly what a poem means. Nevertheless it is possible to decide between different readings of a poem, and it is possible to show that one reading is more likely to be correct than another. There are a number of ways in which this can be done.

Firstly, the critic can give us an analysis of the poem. For instance, he can give us the plain sense of the poem. In some poems, due to syntactical idiosyncracies, it may be difficult to make out the prose sense and there might well be more than one possible sense. When we talk of the rich-

ness of a poem, what we are referring to is the fact that the poem does have several meanings when read at different levels. This has also been described as the depth meaning of a poem. What gives a poem its *richness* or *depth* is that these distinct layers of meaning are held together in the one set of words. Thus the critic would have to distinguish the different levels and explain the meaning of difficult words and the syntax of a poetical line. Again, he may draw attention to the correct way in which a line should be read or scanned, and to alliteration or assonance which bring out its music. In short the critic would take the poem to bits and say, notice these characteristics when you put the poem together again, and see how they fit in with each other. In this way, I believe, he can, in Collingwood's phraseology, help you to recreate the poem—not just any poem.

Let us consider, for example, that obscure and yet tantalizingly compelling poet Hopkins, in one of his comparatively early poems, the curtal sonnet 'Peace':

'When will you ever, peace, wild wood dove, shy wings shut,
Your round me roaming end and under be my boughs?
When, when Peace, will you Peace? I'll not play hypocrite
To own my heart; I yield you do come sometimes; but
That piecemeal peace is poor peace. What pure peace allows
Alarms of wars, the daunting wars, the death of it?
O surely reaving Peace, my lord should leave in lieu
Some good! And so he does leave Patience exquisite
That plumes to Peace thereafter. And when peace here does
house,
He comes with work to do, he does not come to coo
He comes to brood and sit.'

While the central idea is clear, I am sure that every one

making his first acquaintance with this poem, will agree that it can do with some explaining. For instance, the second line, "Your round me roaming end, and under be my boughs". This has been described by some critics as an irritating grammatical tangle. But treat 'round me roaming' as a single word and the grammatical tangle ends. And we see how much more musical this is than if the poet were to have said, "End your roaming round me". The phrase 'under be my boughs' is coined on the model of 'underlie', and carries a sense of passivity which is so essential to peace. Then again there is the alliteration and punning of the line, 'That piecemeal peace is no peace'.

Those who may care to follow Mr. Gardner's excellent analysis of this poem of Hopkins will no doubt be better able to recreate the poem than they might have at the first reading. In short, critical analysis can help us to achieve a fuller synthesis of *the* poem. This, I submit, is one way in which critics can help to explain a poem.

Secondly, I want to point out that as a matter of fact poets themselves have thrown light on their poems or have helped to explain them, just as in their turn the poems might help us in understanding the author. Apart from the poems we have the poets' letters, their diaries, note books and so on. We know for instance what sort of man Blake was, we know a good deal about his philosophy of life. So when we read a poem like 'Tyger, tyger, burning bright' which we sometimes come across in books for children, we know that there is a good deal in it besides what meets the eye at the first reading. And without labouring this somewhat obvious point, I want to contend that when critics give us background material about the life and thought of a poet they are helping to explain *the* poem.

Mr. C.L. Stevenson² in his essay 'Interpretation and Evaluation in Aesthetics' has considered the view that when we are examining different interpretations of a poem, we should give preference to the expressed *intention* of the author. What the author intended might claim to be the poem. But he does not consider that poets are necessarily good advocates for themselves. He says: "... not all artists are great artists and some are impossibly vain and pretentious, intending us to observe their works in ways which are absurd".

It seems to me, however, that Stevenson's argument does not carry much weight. He has not referred to any particular cases in which the artist's intentions are found to be pretentious and absurd. No doubt there will be some evidence in support of his view though there are numerous instances to the contrary also; notably those of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats. But obviously Stevenson's argument will apply only to the *explicit* statements of the artist. For one thing such explicit and detailed statements by artists of what they intended to convey in particular works of art are rare; they cover an extremely small proportion of the total output of artists. For another thing, even these explicit statements need not be taken at their face value. Statements of this kind have to be checked against other evidence of the sort which I mentioned earlier. Thus it is possible for us to get to know the intention of the author and where it is known it can help us to recreate *the* poem.

Thirdly, I want to contend that just as the poem is not an isolated fragment but part of the mental and emotional life of the poet, so the poet also is a member of society occupying a particular place and time in history. The language which he uses is a social and historical fact. I believe that the critic can help us to understand *the* poem by throwing

light on the language and intellectual climate of a particular period. For instance, it is well known that words change their meanings, that words such as 'strange' which we may quietly pass by, had a fairly terrible significance when what was not known tended to be linked with what was dangerous. There are numerous and useful studies which by presenting us with the intellectual and linguistic context of a poet helps us to understand his work.

Fourthly, I want to urge that the critics of the Croce-Collingwood theory seem to suggest that this difficulty in knowing that we have understood or recreated *the* poem, is something which is peculiar to literary or art criticism. They seem to think that in history or economics no less than in science we have absolute certainty but in literary criticism this certainty is lacking. It is, however, admitted on all hands that when we leave the realms of mathematics and logic, as soon, in short, as we start worrying ourselves about what exists in time and space, we have to forget certainty. All knowledge of this kind is probable and there can be no guarantee that what we have found or what we believe to be the truth today will not be upset tomorrow as the result of further research.

So far, then, I have argued that there is something which can be called *the* poem. It is the poem which the critic must try and get to know. There will be happy occasions when there are no differences among critics as to the meaning and aesthetic qualities of a poem. But in some cases, especially in dealing with the works of complex and highly original minds there will be problems. In such cases, the critic may at best be able to say of his interpretation of the poem: "I think this is the poem which the poet wrote". There may be only a slight probability in favour of one interpretation

over others. Nevertheless argument and interpretation can proceed on the assumption that there is some one thing, *the* poem which critics and appreciators are attempting to discover.

Although we have disposed of the solipsistic theory of the art object, we have still to decide between the Croce-Collingwood and the common-sense theory. Does the work of art have to be *recreated* in the image of the original or is it there to be *discovered*, as common-sense supposes.

The Croce-Collingwood theory, as we have seen, holds that primarily the art object is an experience in the mind of the creator; secondly, it is a recreation of this experience for himself by the appreciator. The so-called work of art, the material object such as the painted canvas or the piece of music is only a recording, more or less imperfect, of the artist's experience. Strictly speaking the words 'work of art' cannot occur in the vocabulary of the Croce-Collingwood theory. Collingwood tells us, for instance, that there may be a calculable probability that if a monkey were left to play with a typewriter for long enough, he would produce purely accidentally the complete text of Shakespeare's plays. He adds, with considerable sarcasm, that there are people who might describe a text produced in this way as a great work of art.

Earlier in this chapter we glanced at the distinction between a painting and the score of a musical work. Common-sense tends to regard a painting, the original canvas, as *the* work of art, while the musical score needs a secondary artist for the actualisation of the art object. Collingwood believes that this difference is of little importance and indicates the competence or the lack of it, on the part of the observer or appreciator. The painting too has to be actualised

no less than the musical score—only this process of actualisation has to be performed by the appreciator himself. If the appreciator does not have the know-how, he has to be helped by others. Of Collingwood, it is said, that though passionately fond of music, he was no concert-goer. When he wanted to listen to good music, he simply sat down with the full score of the work before him.

One difference between the plastic arts and music, dancing and poetry is that whereas the former group exist in both space and time, the latter exist in time only. A building or a monument has a definite location in space and goes on existing till it is demolished or decays. A painting or a piece of sculpture has a certain dimension, though its location may change. Music, dancing and poetry have no spatial dimensions or location. Actualising a work of art means recreating it in a physical location. Osborne has suggested a useful set of terms to mark the distinction. Works of art like music and poetry are recorded while others such as painting and sculpture are embodied.

My contention is that actualising a work of art and interpreting a work of art are two quite different functions, whereas according to Collingwood there is only one function, which he designates recreation. No doubt a piece of music, a dance or a poem cannot be actualised in the absence of *some* interpretation on the part of the performer, but the two functions nevertheless remain different. Actualisation is necessary only in the case of those arts which are recorded; interpretation applies to all works. The problem of interpretation is to determine what are the qualities of a particular work and how its parts are inter-related.

Let us examine this question of actualisation and interpretation a little more closely. Mr. Harold Osborne in his

*Aesthetics and Criticism*³ and Mr. C. L. Stevenson in an essay entitled 'Interpretation and Evaluation in Aesthetics' seem to agree on certain points. Whenever we speak of a work of art the following points are implied: (a) There is a material object or there are certain physical stimuli such as sounds in music. (b) There are what may be described as *standard* conditions. A painting has to be viewed from a particular distance and the light must be appropriate. Music must be listened to in a room or a hall which has the right accoustic properties. So far we may agree with them. But here Stevenson and Osborne part company, though not in any fundamental way. Stevenson contends that when we talk of a work of art we are speaking of an *appearance* in the mind of some observer or the other. Thus in addition to conditions (a) and (b) mentioned above, he contends that a third condition also applies, namely, (c) that there is an appearance in the mind of some individual. He further contends that no particular appearance can claim to be *the* work of art and he puts forward two reasons for this, one of which we have examined earlier. The acceptance of condition (c) would reduce Mr. Stevenson's position to that of the solipsists.

The third implication which Osborne finds in all talk about works of art is what he calls "the competent observer". A work of art is never "actualised" except as an experience in the mind of a competent observer. I do not intend here to get involved in the labyrinth of defining the competent observer, since I do not believe that any satisfactory definition is possible. It is not 'competent critics' defined a priori whom we have to follow; it is the precise arguments in favour of, or against a particular interpretation of a work of art that we have to consider.

But returning to Osborne after this aside, we find that condition (c) for the actualisation of a work of art brings him to much the same position as Collingwood. He says, for example, that... "the material object is in no case identical with the work of art. It is not the material object of paint and canvas which is beautiful but the set of visual impressions to which it gives rise under suitable conditions". And again, "We say then, that for any work of art to be actualised, a necessary condition is that it shall be observed by a competent person, and that the degree in which it is actualised will be correspondent with the degree of competence in the observer. Until this happens and except when it happens, what we are accustomed to call a work of art is strictly only the potentiality of a work of art. A work of art is an enduring potentiality for the actualisation of a specific set of perceptions" (*Aesthetics and Criticism*—pp.231-234).

At this point it is worthwhile to remember a point which Stevenson makes about the objectives which a critical aesthetic can reasonably place before itself. In aesthetics we can hope to achieve what he calls a middle degree of clarity. If in aesthetics we were to demand the same exacting standards as we do in epistemology, the enquiry would never begin. Let us agree then that it is within this range of a middle degree of clarity that the present enquiry is being conducted, a point which seems also to be accepted by Osborne. Let us compare a chair or a vase with a painting. A chair or a vase does not, for common-sense, have to be *actualised*. Or does it? Suppose our chair is a carved high backed chair belonging to Georgian England. A teen-ager from a remote Naga village seeing it for the first time might indeed wonder for a moment as to what it was that confronted him. No doubt he would soon relate it to the stools

and platforms which his own people use as chairs and he might compare it favourably or adversely with similar Naga furniture in the circumstances and conditions of their use. Suppose on the other hand that our observer is a social historian or an antique furniture dealer. In ordinary language we would say that the chair means a lot more to the social historian or the antique furniture dealer than it does to our Naga friend. But could we also say that the Georgian chair was *actualised* only in the minds of the social historian and the antique furniture dealer? No doubt this would be stretching the ordinary meanings of words beyond acceptable limits. Be that as it may, how is the situation different when we come to a work of art, say, a poem in English. If the observer does not understand the language, the poem makes no sense at all, though the manner of reciting it, might help him to recognise it as a poem. On the other hand, the student of literature (as in the case of the chair) *sees a lot more in it*. The poem means more to the expert than to the man who can just about recognise it as a poem. And what are the processes by which a person becomes an expert on Georgian chairs or a competent literary critic? The processes, I suggest, are the same. In both cases it is through learning things about the chair or the poem that he comes to know them—it is in each instance a voyage of discovery.

At this point it may be worthwhile to examine the use of words and phrases such as 'enduring potentialities' and 'actualisation' which seem to hide a metaphysical mystery inherited from Aristotle. Osborne's usage seems neither to conform to Aristotle nor to the usage in physics. For when Aristotle speaks of the acorn as a potential oak, it is the acorn itself which undergoes a process of transformation or actualisation—into a gigantic tree. Again, when the potential

energy of a stone at the top of a cliff is transformed into kinetic energy, it is the *stone* in motion which has it. In Osborne's terminology, however, it is not the painted canvas which is transformed into a work of art in the presence of a competent observer, it is something quite different which is the so-called work of art, namely, the perceptions of the observer. Strictly speaking this is a causal theory of art, in which the use of words such as *potential* and *actual* is quite inappropriate.

Let us now for the sake of clarity conceive of a work of art according to the three theories we have examined, the Solipsistic theory, the Croce-Collingwood and the Commonsense. Let us then see how the process of discovering a work of art can apply in each of these cases.

To take the Solipsistic theory first. On this theory I create my own art object and you create yours. My art object is like my tooth-ache. It seems doubtful whether it makes much sense to say that I am *discovering* my tooth-ache—I either have it or I don't. But to a limited extent I suppose it is possible for me to discriminate, to distinguish one kind of tooth-ache from another, to be hesitant for a minute and say, "No, it is not a continuous dull pain. I have shooting pains". I doubt whether remarks of this kind indicate a process of discovery. At any rate, one thing is clear. If I create my art object, then getting to know a work of art is like getting to know my tooth-ache; it is purely an introspective process. It seems to me evident that as a matter of fact, this is not how we get to know works of art. Introspective analysis is not going to yield the meaning of a difficult poem nor give me a clue to its formal characteristics. Incidentally what little plausibility the Solipsistic view of the art object has, it acquires on assumptions which are realistic. But it is hardly reason-

able to take a realistic view about physical objects, other minds, language and so on, and then on this one subject, the work of art, acquire mentalist scruples.

What happens if we conceive of the art object a la Croce-Collingwood and Osborne? In this case the work of art has to be actualised in an experience which is like the creative experience of the author. How is this to be done? Can you first actualise a work of art and then start discovering it? Collingwood tells us that in the case of the artist-creator, it is in the actualisation, through the process of finding expression that the artist discovers it. When it comes to the appreciator, however, it is evident that discovering must come first. For actualisation must be in accordance with *some* interpretation and this interpretation implies knowledge of how the work of art should be. No doubt as time goes on one's interpretation may change and this may be the result of difficulties experienced in the so-called process of actualisation. We may find inconsistencies in a particular interpretation.

The above argument shows that actualising a work of art as required by Croce-Collingwood and Osborne implies a prior knowledge of it. In other words there is an internal inconsistency—a work of art only exists if it is actualised but a work of art cannot be actualised unless we already know it. In short the external object must be the work of art, not the so-called actualised percepts caused by it in the mind of a competent observer.

Suppose, there is a set of percepts in the mind of Clive Bell while he is observing Cezanne Still Life. Presumably it would be admitted on all hands that he is a competent observer. Then the question arises: Is *that* the work of art and if so how am *I* going to get to know it? It seems clear, when put in this way, that I can get to know Cezanne's *still*

life only if I happen to be a competent observer myself. And getting to know Cezanne's work would amount to no more than getting to know my own experience through introspective analysis. We have, in dealing with the Solipsistic theory, rejected this view; we do not get to know works of art through analysing our own mental processes.

On the common-sense theory, discovering a work of art is no mysterious process. You get to know works of art as you get to *know* an old piece of furniture or a motor car. It is not like discovering your friend's tooth-ache, where perhaps one may be driven to having tooth-ache oneself! When discovering a work of art, it is necessary to concentrate on the object. What are the salient features of the poem or the painting or whatever it is? How are the parts related to each other? What was the problem the artist faced, what was his purpose and how did he achieve it in the work before us? It is necessary to emphasise this point because a number of philosophers and critics seem to work on quite a different assumption—the assumption, namely, that the personal reactions of the critic are of prime importance. Thus Stevenson, in the essay already referred to, says that the critic's aim in interpreting a work of art is “to decide how to react to it in an appropriate way and to guide others in doing so”. And on this assumption it is easy to see why the personal reaction of critics have baulked so largely in criticism of the arts. Incidentally the research worker, no less than the secondary artist or the performer, needs specialised training and equipment. You need as much training and experience, not to speak of imagination, to discover a work of art as you need to excavate archaeological remains. Discovering a work of art, I suggest, is somewhat like being confronted by one of those cards which are thrust before you when you go to the eye

specialist to test your colour vision. In that mass of dots of various colours you are expected to find a letter or a figure—in short, a specific pattern. If you are completely colour blind, the whole thing will be an undifferentiated grey-white expanse. If you are blind to blue and yellow you will not be able to find the pattern or you may find what looks like a pattern and is not the right one. Only if your colour vision is correct—and provided you have the patience—will you be able to find the correct pattern.

The big difference between the work of art and the colour-vision card, is that in the latter there is a great deal which is irrelevant and the problem is to make out what is relevant in this chaos. In the work of art, everything is relevant but one has to discover its relevance and that can only be done through finding the pattern of the whole.

This, then, is the position in which the appreciator of art finds himself. In the physical stimuli, the verbal noise or shape, and in the meaning, he must search for the pattern, the configuration, which is the art object. If he is to be successful, the appreciator must have the right sensibilities and he must have patience. He must keep his own fantasies and predilections in the background and concentrate on the object before him.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. I.A. Richards, *Practical Criticism*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, p. 182.
2. C.L. Stevenson, 'Interpretation & Evaluation in Aesthetics', *Philosophical Analysis*, Ed. Max Black, Prentice Hall, 1963, p. 328.
3. H. Osborne, *Aesthetics and Criticism*, Kegan Paul, 1955.

Chapter III

ART AND IMAGINATION

It is universally accepted that there is a special and close relationship between works of art on the one hand and imagination and feeling on the other. Without imagination and feeling works of art cannot be created and a little of both is required also for the proper appreciation of them. But when we come to stating the precise nature of their relationship we find ourselves involved in considerable confusion.

Let us start with imagination. Furlong in his recent book *Imagination*¹ refers to three distinct uses of the word imagination. He distinguishes between something being 'in imagination', of something being done 'with imagination' and 'supposal'. When we speak of something being 'in imagination' we contrast this form of existence with existence or being 'in reality'. Images, dreams, illusions and hallucinations are some of the things which exist in imagination. Art objects also, according to Collingwood, exist in imagination.

When we talk of 'in imagination', we are talking of a manner or form of existence. We are concerned with an

ontological question. But the phrase 'with imagination' is adverbial; it refers to an activity performed in a particular way, that is, imaginatively or unimaginatively. In speaking of 'supposal' we are talking of the end product, of something which is supposed, for instance, the supposal that "the world is such as described by Kafka", etc. We see then, that there are three lines along which the relation between imagination and art can be examined. There is firstly the ontological question. Is the work of art an imaginary object or an illusion? Secondly, there is the question as to how the work of art is created; a work of art has to be created with imagination. How does the imagination function in such cases? And thirdly, there is the question of the end-product. Is the art object an instance of supposal? How does it compare with other instances of supposal? These are the three lines of enquiry which we propose to pursue.

When philosophers such as Croce and Collingwood talk about art and imagination, what they are primarily concerned to establish is that the work of art is an imaginary object. We saw in Chapter II that according to Collingwood the work of art is essentially an experience, something which exists *in* the mind of the artist. From the words of the poem or the paint on canvas the appreciator must re-create the experience of the artist. And only in so far as he is able to do this can he be said to know the work of art. We may say that according to Collingwood, the work of art exists 'in imagination'. It is an imaginary object.

When you say that the work of art exists 'in imagination' or is an imaginary object, you seem to be flying in the face of common-sense. Works of art appear to be different from dreams, images, illusions and hallucinations which are some of the other objects which we commonly speak of as

existing 'in imagination'.

Collingwood is, therefore, chiefly concerned to show that the distinction between 'real' and 'imaginary' is not quite what common-sense makes it out to be. His contention is that *qua sensa*, there is no difference between the colour blue that you experience when you perceive the sea and the colour blue as you imagine it in dreaming of the sea. He considers this thesis in the light of the history of philosophical thought; in the views of the rationalists, the empiricists and Kant. The rationalists and Kant, Collingwood argues, agree with him, whereas he finds the empiricists involved in difficulties. How then is one to account for the difference which exists at the common-sense level between a real chair and an imaginary chair? Collingwood writes: "Sensa cannot be divided, by any test whatever, into real and imaginary; sensations cannot be divided into real sensations and imaginations. That experience which we call sensation is of one kind only, and is not amenable to the distinction between real and unreal, true and false, radical and illusory. That which is true or false is thought; and our sensa are called real and illusory in so far as we think truly or falsely about them. To think about them is to interpret them, which means stating the relations in which they stand to other sensa, actual or possible. A real *sensum* means a *sensum* correctly interpreted; an illusory *sensum* one falsely interpreted. And an imaginary *sensum* means one which has not been interpreted at all: either because we have tried to interpret it and have failed or because we have not tried. These are not three kinds of sensa, nor are they sensa corresponding with three kinds of sensory acts. Nor are they sensa, which on being correctly interpreted, are found to be related to their fellows in three different ways. They are sensa in respect of which the inter-

pretative work of thought has been done well, or done ill or left undone".²

Collingwood's broad intention when he speaks of the interpretative work of thought is fairly clear. On the phenomenalist pattern, the sensum must be correlated with other sensa. And on the success or failure to achieve this depends knowledge. For instance, if I experience certain visual sensa and jump to the conclusion that they indicate what common-sense calls a hat, then successful interpretation would mean that the visual sensa should be correlated with certain definite tactual sensa also, namely, those designated by shape, size, texture and so on. If the correct correlation between various types of sensa obtains, then it can be affirmed that I correctly interpreted the visual sensa as "seeing my hat". This is what happens when I see a "real" object. On the other hand presumably when Collingwood speaks of the interpretative work of thought being done ill he means that it is an interpretation which leads to perceptual error. On observing certain visual sensa, I jump to the conclusion that it is my hat. But subsequent observation shows that the visual sensa in question are not correlated with the tactual sensa associated with a hat. On touching the so-called hat I might discover it is just a piece of cardboard.

In the case of illusions, hallucinations, etc., Collingwood contends that the interpretative work of thought is not done at all. But no light is thrown on how illusions differ from perceptual error.

It is not my intention here to enter into an examination of the phenomenalist theory of perception. Suffice it to say that in my opinion the phenomenalist interpretation is given a semblance of plausibility because in the actual statement of their argument, sensa are identified and located with refer-

ence to physical objects. We can construct the physical object out of a set of *sensa* because it is really a case of *reconstruction*. Be that as it may, the question is as to how this phenomenalist interpretation helps to solve the problem before us. Collingwood is hardly consistent because he tells us that the seen colours and heard sounds are not art. "The work of art proper is something not seen or heard but something imagined".³ This is to suggest that the work of art exists in a different way from the sounds and the colours, though his thesis commits him to the view that there is no such difference. And equally he fails to distinguish the work of art from illusion because in both we "see things which are not there", e.g. changes in the expression of puppets. It is, therefore, not at all clear how the common-sense distinction between something being *real* or being *in imagination* is explained on his theory.

We have, however, given reasons for supposing that the work of art exists in the outside world just as other objects do. Knowing works of art, like knowing other objects is an act of discovery. But many writers on aesthetics have likened the art object to an illusion. This thesis, the illusory character of the work of art, may be said to take two forms. In one form the theory is held by Clive Bell and Mrs. Langer. In distinguishing the art object from natural beauty, and in pointing out that *significant form* evokes aesthetic emotion which is different from the emotions of ordinary life, Clive Bell stresses that there is something other-worldly about works of art. Mrs. Langer writes: "This detachment from actuality, the 'otherness' that gives even a bonafide product like a building or a vase some aura of illusion is a crucial factor, indicative of the very nature of art".⁴ For Mrs. Langer, this illusoriness arises only partly from the fact that the art

object is cut off from the mundane world of practical desires. It arises also from the fact, that works of art of a particular kind concentrate on a single sense, so that all the other properties of the object become unimportant or irrelevant. What Mrs. Langer calls *virtual space* is the primary illusion of the plastic arts just as *virtual time* is the fundamental illusion of music and its species.

It is evident that in talking of the illusory character of works of art, these writers use the word 'illusion' in a special or technical sense. They want to suggest that the enjoyment of a work of art transports you, the observer, into a different world from the mundane world of practical needs. If this is the case, then what is claimed is that works of art have the capacity to create such a reaction in the observer, not that the work of art itself is an illusion. These writers themselves point out that you are not *deceived* by a work of art as you are by an illusion. It seems, therefore, that the application of the word *illusion* to works of art has given rise only to confusion. It seems to me, that the use of the word *illusion* is inept from another point of view also. For if the main purpose is to draw attention to the other-worldly character of art, its severance from practicality, then this is not achieved by using the word *illusion*. Illusions are often born out of unfulfilled desires, and it is in testing them against practical needs, that their illusory character is shown up.

It will be seen that in talking of art as an illusion or of the illusory character of art, these writers are not describing a relation which the art object has to imagination. They are not contending that, like an illusion, the work of art exists in *imagination*, the problem with which we are here chiefly concerned.

Alexander, who also speaks of 'the beautiful' as in a

certain sense illusory, shares with Langer and Bell the view we have discussed above. But he goes on to make a statement, which if true, would give some plausibility to the supposed illusory character of works of art. He says: "In illusion proper, as when we take a reflection to be a real thing, the imputed characters really do belong to the object we fancy, but are wrongly imputed to the object which is actually present. But the features we impute in art to the material do not belong to it, are in general foreign to it. The marble which looks alive is itself a block of stone; the figures of Giotto, if I may take the example made familiar by Mr. Benenson, press upon the ground they tread on, as the figures of the lesser artist Duccio, he says do not..."⁵ The argument in short is that the sculpt is admired for "looking alive" whereas it is a piece of stone. What 'looks alive' must be something else, viz. the work of art, the illusion. In other words certain characteristics which we assert of works of art such as 'this bronze is alive' or 'the painting has depth', etc., do not apply to the physical material—the piece of metal or the canvas; they apply to something else, the illusion, the work of art.

This contention has been examined at some length by Mr. Paul Ziff in his paper entitled 'Art and the Object of Art' included in *Aesthetics and Language*. Mr. Ziff has produced two main arguments against the view that the work of art is an illusion.

The first argument consists in pointing out that we are *deceived* by the illusion but we are *not* deceived by the work of art. This argument seems hardly to touch the problem. For Alexander, and others who support this view, are themselves quite categorical in drawing attention to *this* difference between works of art and illusions. Their conten-

tion, if one is not simply interested in interpreting them literally in order to score a debating point, is that works of art share *some* characteristics of illusions. One such feature is that the sculpt only *seems to be alive* (whereas it is just a piece of dead stone) and the figures in a painting only *seem to be in motion* (while in fact they are static). And this is like seeing a mirage; there seems to be water but there is only sand.

The second argument produced by Mr. Ziff is to point out that there may be several types of descriptions of a single object. There is, for instance, the carpenter's description of a painting (supposing his job to be the production of crates). He may describe it as a 'flat canvas stretched between boards four feet by six feet'. An art dealer may speak of a painting as expensive and an art critic may say that the painting has great depth. Mr. Ziff's contention is that these statements represent 'different families of descriptions', that they are different descriptions of a single object, not descriptions of different objects. And provided we keep statements belonging to different families of descriptions apart, there is no problem and no confusion.

I agree with Mr. Ziff that this explanation of the problem is all right as far as it goes. But the trouble is that it does not go far enough to dispel once and for all the suspicion that the carpenter's description does in some way apply to a real object, whereas the art critic's description applies only to an imaginary object or an illusion. Mr. Ziff has not explained to us how this uneasiness is to be removed.

I think that there are two ways in which we can set about resolving this problem. In the first place it appears to me that there is much loose talk in aesthetics and criticism as to what constitutes a *description* of an art object. For ins-

tance in the case before us, there are the statements of Clive Bell and Susanne Langer about the so-called 'other worldly' character of art objects. But even a little probing shows that what these people are talking about is not a painting or a piece of music, but about themselves: and this indeed seems to be the bane of critics, that while pretending to enlighten us about the work of art they actually succeed in letting off a great deal of egoistic hot air. So, the first thing we have to do is to find out whether the alleged quality is a *quality of the work of art* at all, or whether it is a statement about the reactions of the critic. Most frequently what appears to happen is that a statement is made by the critic. This statement *prima facie* does not apply to the work of art, as understood by common-sense, so it is forthwith assumed that the common-sense notion is at fault and the work of art is something different—it is an illusion or an imaginary object.

If these statements are meaningless or if these statements are not statements about the art object but about the critic's own state of mind, the problem is nipped in the bud. It is my suggestion that in many cases, problems raised by trying to find a plausible interpretation of statements made by critics are pseudo-problems which can be dispelled by an analysis of the so-called aesthetic qualities attributed to art objects.

The second line of thought, which is a development of the argument advanced by Ziff, is to point out that the work of art is concrete. The painting *is* a canvas of certain dimensions stretched between boards; the painting *is* a flat surface with daubs of paint on it; when looked at from a reasonable distance, the painting does have recognisable shapes and patterns and, provided it is not a Mughal miniature, it does

have depth. This last aspect of the painting is the relevant one from the aesthetic point of view, i.e., what the painting looks like when viewed in certain standard conditions which include the acceptance of certain conventions. When the carpenter talks about the painting, he is abstracting from the concrete reality a particular aspect which happens to be of interest to him, and the art critic and the art dealer abstract, similarly different aspects which concern them. It seems to me that there is no reason to accept one description of the object as of greater validity, than another; and then to attempt to 'reconcile' these descriptions by saying that one applies to the art object or the illusion. Statements of the form "The cost of this painting is fifty rupees" and "The price of this painting is two thousand rupees" when the reference is to the same painting, may give us, at most a moment's suspicion that some sort of contradiction has been committed. But such apparent contradictions are easily reconciled. The first statement we could see is about the cost of production, the cost of the canvas and the paint. The second statement refers to value in exchange. We know perfectly well that these two concepts are quite different, and, though we might jib sometimes over the price of an article because it touches our pockets, we are certainly not thrown into philosophical perplexity on finding that the price differs from the cost of production. In the same way we can see that there is no *contradiction* involved in the statements "the painting is a flat surface" and "the painting has depth".

Incidentally, it is worth enquiring how the illusion theory is supposed to solve the contradiction with which we are alleged to be faced. Presumably, the difficulty arises because the painting is on a flat surface and in some sense cannot

have depth. But if that is the case, then the imaginary object or the illusion, which exists in the mind also cannot have depth, for the imaginary object is not in space at all.

We come now to the usage 'with imagination' in relation to art. In this usage, imagination means inventiveness or creativity and the main problem is to find out how imagination works in the creation of art. This, however, is a problem in psychology with which we are not concerned. Furlong has pointed out that activities which allow some freedom in the use of material are those which can be performed "with imagination". Where the alternatives are restricted, the activity becomes stereotyped. When something has been done 'with imagination', we mean that it displays originality. So, when we speak of a work of art as showing great imagination, we are referring to this quality, its originality—originality which may be achieved by creating new structures out of old material, by using the common-place to communicate new ideas and in creating novelty in a hundred different ways.

The relationship of 'supposal' to works of art is complicated and intriguing. Furlong distinguishes between two forms of supposal which he calls respectively, plain supposal and false supposal. Instances of the former are provided by "Suppose that you are sitting on the top of a hill looking down on the city which sprawls on both sides of the river" or "Suppose that this is Shangrila and people do not grow old" or "Suppose that two sides of a triangle are not greater than the third". False supposal occurs when you have a hallucination or see a mirage. False supposal is synonymous with 'imagine falsely'. We have already discussed the question whether works of art are cases of illusion, that is false supposal; and we concluded that they are not. We propose now to enquire into the relationship between works of art

and plain supposal.

To begin with, we might consider further Furlong's contention that supposal can be 'in imagination', but it need not be, and supposal can be 'with imagination' or not. So far as the usage 'with imagination' is concerned I think we can readily agree that whatever is supposed may be supposed with more or less imagination. And, in a certain sense, we might even say that something had been done without imagination. There are situations in which we say that no imagination is required. But when we come to picturing or describing such situations we find ourselves in some difficulty. In theory the main features of such a situation would be fulfilled if an individual has to carry out fixed and specified responses to given signals. For instance you might say "When the red light comes on, press button A. When the green light comes on, press button B." But unfortunately no set of instructions is foolproof. Machines go out of order, and persons appointed to provide the answers are sometimes not to be found at the right moment. Thus, if ever a situation arises for which there is no ready-made answer, it becomes necessary to use one's imagination. 'With imagination', therefore, is an activity which admits of degrees. The categories of more or less apply and as an ideal limit only would it be possible to say that an activity could be performed *totally* without imagination. There would, however, appear to be no such ideal limit at the 'upper end' of the scale. Whereas you can speak, at least theoretically, of the perfectly straight line as an ideal limit, there is no corresponding usage respecting the phrase 'with imagination'. Thus the activity of supposing, can with these provisos, be performed with or without imagination.

In regard to 'in imagination', we have to remind our-

selves that this usage is in opposition to the phrase 'in reality'. Supposal is parasitic on the two concepts of 'with imagination' and 'in imagination'. Furlong believes that supposal is "an activity that can be performed, or a state reached, in imagination (or not)". As example he mentions that Peter can play policeman just sitting in his chair, 'in imagination' picturing himself in a uniform chasing thieves, or else he can run after two of his companions who represent the thieves. The latter is a case of pretending and Furlong's contention seems to be that pretending in an instance of supposal 'in reality'. Although Furlong does not admit it, there is some difficulty here. For while Peter may be actually running after his two friends, he does have to *imagine* that they are thieves and he does also have to *imagine* that he is a policeman. If the friends were 'in reality' thieves and if Peter were 'in reality' a policeman, why need the question of supposing arise? It seems, therefore, that whatever is supposed is 'in imagination' to a greater or lesser degree, as I have shown in this example. *What* is supposed, is never wholly in reality⁶.

We come now to examining 'supposal' itself. There are here, quite evidently, two different things involved. There is firstly the mental *activity* of supposing. We say 'Let us suppose that...'. And secondly there is *something* which is supposed. We can conveniently refer to this as the supposal. The supposal is always a proposition. We say, suppose *that* so and so is the case.

In this context, it is instructive to compare supposal with knowledge and belief. Like knowledge and belief, supposal has two aspects which we have distinguished as *supposing* and *supposal*. Alexander provides a convenient shorthand for this when he speaks of the *ing* and the *ed*. But believing

and supposing are different from knowing in one respect. In the case of knowing we can speak of *knowing* and *knowing that* on which are grounded two kinds of knowing, acquaintance and description. To these can be added *knowing how* that is the *know-how* of doing jobs. On the other hand it is always a case of believing *that* or supposing *that*.

What are the chief features of the mental activity which we designate as supposing? When we say "let us suppose" or "suppose for the moment" or "supposing that" what is it that we are asking our listener or reader to do? It seems that the first and most important thing we are asking him to do is to suspend disbelief. We say "Suppose for the moment that these two arrows represent the advance of the enemy on this strategic point"; "Suppose the two sides of a triangle are not greater than the third"; "Suppose that light does not travel in straight lines" and so on. In each instance we are asking our hearers, or enjoining upon ourselves the adoption of a certain attitude. This attitude is the opposite of belief or disbelief. For the time being we have to suspend our judgement.

A second characteristic feature of supposing is that it implies the activity of inferring, of explicitly or implicitly drawing conclusions. When you ask a person to suppose something, to suspend temporarily his disbelief, you do not leave him there, hanging in mid air as it were. A process of inference follows and there is a conclusion. In the case of a scientific hypothesis or in mathematics, we say, suppose so and so, and then we immediately proceed to infer certain conclusions which follow. This is equally the case with the military instructor explaining strategy on a map or with Peter playing policeman. "If I am a policeman", he says, "and you are the thieves, then it *follows* that you are frightened

of me and will run from me, etc.” Sometimes the conclusion which is drawn is used to confirm the original premise which was supposed, sometimes to show up its absurdity and in still others we just leave the supposal and the conclusion as they are, to be reflected upon.

Thirdly, it would appear that supposing is an activity which we often resort to when we are faced with a problem. It is a method we adopt for solving problems. When the scientist, the mathematician, the strategist says “suppose”, he does so because he has a problem before him to which he is seeking to provide an answer. And this was obviously the case with Wittgenstein when he said in that well-known passage of his *Tractatus*: “Let us imagine a white surface with irregular black spots...”

What, it may be asked, of Peter playing policeman? Is this a case of supposing in order to solve problems? It might be argued that Peter and his friends have a problem, they are bored and they solve their problem by playing policeman. By supposing that one of them is a policeman and the others thieves they get a bit of excitement and their boredom vanishes.

But this argument seems to me to have at most a superficial plausibility. In the first place when we talk of a *problem* in the present context, we mean a problem which the agent is fully conscious of. He thinks about it. Peter's predicament is not a problem in this sense. He has certain urges, the satisfaction of which results in play. Play may be the outcome of exuberance of energy. Let us admit then that when Peter plays policeman, he is not solving problems, he is just having some fun.

It would seem, therefore, that we resort to this activity of supposing in two types of situations—we employ it as a

technique for solving problems and we make use of it when we want to play. We play murder, tell fantastic stories, or indulge in banter for amusement, and these activities are also instances of supposing.

Fourthly, it may be said that in supposing, we are, as it were, taking a little holiday from the affairs of practical living. As we have pointed out, when I say "suppose so and so" I am asking you to suspend disbelief. I am asking you to follow me on an excursion in fancy. If later, this little excursion is to be followed up by action, then supposing has to be replaced by believing. Supposing is an activity in which we explore the realm of possibility. It is, therefore, in a way cut off from the existent, from practical reality. Believing is tied up with, germane to, living; behind the scenes it is there all the time, except when you sleep. Supposing is intermittent, it is something which you can afford only now and then, when you step aside from the business of living, like an engine idling.

When we turn from supposing to what is supposed, we find that the supposed consists of a group or a set of propositions. We find first a proposition, which is supposed. This proposition functions as a premise. I propose to call this proposition the assumption. For instance in the following example, the assumption is that the enemy can attack this town from two sides, east and north west. This premise, the assumption, is hypothetical. Sometimes the assumption may comprise several premises, each hypothetical. The assumption, comprising one or more hypothetical premises is then combined with one or more factual or categorical premise to draw a conclusion. Thus, as in the example above, the factual or categorical premises would be "The enemy, who has little heavy armour, prefers jungles to open coun-

try. The eastern approach is over wooded and mountainous country. The north western road is through flat, open country." The conclusion drawn would be "Therefore, despite appearances to the contrary, the weight of the attack will be from the east". The above is in fact the argument of the hypothetical syllogism of the text books of logic. If then supposal is to be replaced by belief as a foundation for action, the *supposed* must be subjected to critical scrutiny. The hypothetical propositions constituting the assumption have to be replaced by categorical propositions. Sometimes the conclusion of a hypothetical argument is self-evidently absurd. As a result we are able to show the falsity of the assumption. This is the technique of the argument *reductio ad absurdum*.

Our main finds about supposal may then be summed up as follows:

Supposal involves *supposing* and what is *supposed*. Supposing is a state in which we temporarily suspend disbelief; supposing includes inference. It is an activity which we resort to in attempting to solve problems or for purposes of play. The *supposed* comprises certain assumptions which serve as a major premise; categorical propositions which function as a minor premise, and a conclusion. It is in fact an hypothetical argument. In problem-solving cases, the conclusion of the *supposed* is used to confirm or deny the assumption.

A considerable part of our intellectual activity is taken up with supposal. The formulation of scientific hypotheses are clear cases of supposal. In philosophical discussion we say continuously 'suppose so and so'; Wittgenstein enjoins us to do so repeatedly in his *Investigations*.

I am tempted to say that works of art are cases of

supposal. But this might be an over-simplification. Let us see then which of the arts show the hallmarks of supposal among those we have outlined above.

Let us start with the negative cases which can be written off straight away. Supposal as we pointed out, involves on the subjective side the adoption of a certain mental attitude, the temporary suspension of disbelief. Supposing involves a respite from practicality. Obviously, therefore, in crafts and in the practical arts, the question of supposing does not arise. A building exists, it is there, it serves and is meant to serve a practical purpose. You cannot stand before the Jama Masjid at Delhi and say, "suppose this to be a mosque". It is one and that is an end of the matter. No doubt when the architect designs a building, he can hurriedly draw a few lines on a paper and say "suppose this is a mosque, then the main courtyard will be here and so on and so on". But this drawing, the blue-print or plan is not the work of art, the work of art is the finished building, its design and proportions and the materials used in its construction.

In the case of architecture, then, the mental activity characteristic of supposing, viz. suspension of disbelief does not arise. So also there is no activity of inferring. But the third characteristic, namely, supposing as an answer to a problem, does seem to apply. Architecture is an answer to a problem; the building that the architect constructs, the materials he uses are his answer to his problem. When we appraise or appreciate the building we must consider how far the building has succeeded in solving the problems of the architect. This would seem to apply also in the case of crafts; they are produced as solutions to problems by craftsmen and have to be considered as such by those who use them and by appreciators and critics. It is possible that

there are a few buildings, and doubtless there are hundreds of examples of crafts, which have been made purely for decorative purposes. These works may be considered as instances of play, just as supposals are resorted to for play.

On the objective side architecture and the practical arts, have little in common with supposal. What is *supposed* are certain hypothetical propositions. These together with one or more categorical propositions lead to a conclusion. In short, on the objective side the *supposed* is a hypothetical argument. Quite obviously a building or handicrafts do not constitute hypothetical arguments.

Let us now consider music, dance, painting, sculpture and literature.

Music seems indeed to have occupied a special place in the affection of philosophers interested in art. Plato described philosophy as the highest form of music and according to Plato all arts attempt to approximate to the condition of music which is the highest of the arts. But it is Susanne Langer who has been the first to attempt to show this and to construct a theory of art which is built round a theory of music. According to Mrs. Langer, music pictures (in Wittgenstein's sense of the word) feelings. This picturing is possible because music is a symbol of a special kind. Mrs. Langer distinguishes between what she describes as discursive and presentational symbols. Language is a discursive symbol. Language is made up of words and sentences. A word is a symbol, it stands for something which constitutes its meaning. Words have conventional meanings. A sentence too is a symbol; it has meaning. The meaning of the sentence is in some sense *composite*; it is dependent on the meaning of words and of their being ordered in a particular way, namely, in accordance with the rules of syntax. In contrast,

presentational symbols are not *composite* as discursive symbols are. A presentational symbol has parts, but these parts are not themselves conventional symbols. In short presentational symbols do not have a vocabulary. Music, which is the presentational symbol par excellence, is made up of notes. The notes or combination of notes, unlike words in a language, do not have a conventional meaning. Yet, according to Mrs. Langer, the musical composition taken as a whole, has meaning. She says: "Perhaps, in the same spirit of strict nomenclature, one really should not refer to its content as "meaning" either. Just as music is only loosely and inexactly called a language, so its symbolic function is only loosely called meaning, because the factor of conventional reference is missing from it. In *Philosophy in a New Key* music was called an "unconsummated" symbol. But meaning in the usual sense recognised in semantics, includes the condition of conventional reference, or consummation of the symbolic relationship. Music has *import*, and this import is the pattern of sentience—the pattern of life itself, as it is felt and directly known. Let us call the significance of music its "vital import" instead of 'meaning', using vital not as a vague laudatory term, but as a qualifying adjective, restricting the relevance of "import" to the dynamism of subjective experience".⁷

The distinction between discursive and presentational symbols is examined elsewhere in this volume. We have referred to the matter here merely to assist us to discuss the question as to whether music can be taken as an instance of supposal. On Mrs. Langer's theory music is a symbol. Taken as such there is some plausibility in considering it as a case of supposal. But even on this hypothesis we may find that music does not possess the chief characterising

features of supposal. On the other hand if music is not a symbol then there would be even less reason for considering it as a case of supposal.

It seems to me, however, that even considered as a symbol, music presents few points of resemblance to supposal. The creation of a musical composition may be the result of an attempt to solve a problem or it may emerge from the free play of the imagination. In this respect the creation or enjoyment of music has points of resemblance with supposing. But unlike supposing there is nothing in the creation or enjoyment of music which corresponds to inferring and the suspension of disbelief which are important characteristics of the activity of supposing. When we come to the objective side, that is, to what is supposed then the analogy with music seems wholly lacking. The assertion of premises, the logical nexus between statements are characteristics which distinguish, in Mrs. Langer's scheme, discursive from presentational symbols. A presentational symbol such as music then cannot be a hypothetical argument.

When we turn to dancing, painting and sculpture where the element of representation is present, the relation with supposal becomes considerably closer. Classical Indian dancing either tells a story or is a form of devotion. It is almost like a discursive symbol with a conventional vocabulary in which each gesture has definite meaning. In Western ballet too, the dancers present a story though the gestures are purely formal having no definite conventional meaning, as they do in Indian dancing. The creation or enjoyment of dance implies the acceptance of certain conventions. We say to ourselves, let us suppose this is Radha awaiting Lord Krishna. The various gestures of the

hands, movements of the feet, neck, eye and lip mean so and so. Assuming this, what follows is the dance, presenting the story or showing it, in terms of these conventions. The development and change of mood, the relationship between mood and expression are all shown, brought out and established through the dance.

In similar fashion, the acceptance of certain conventions is implied in sculpture and painting. In painting the ability to *see* depth on a flat surface, itself implies the acceptance of 'a point of view' or a convention, however unconscious it may become. Wittgenstein said, in the *Tractatus* that in contrast with languages, there are no foreign paintings. But how wrong he was! The appreciation of Chinese painting or the different schools of Indian painting, no less than European painting, implies the understanding of different conventions, or assumptions in our terminology. Speaking of child art and primitive art, Roger Fry says: "The artist does not seek to transfer a visual sensation to paper, but to express a mental image which is coloured by his *conceptual habits*"⁸ (my italics). The history of Western painting seems indeed to be nothing more than a demonstration of this very thesis.

Assuming certain things, then, his conceptual habits as Roger Fry calls them, what does the painter do? It seems to me that he brings out or *shows* the relations between figures in virtual space. These relations, observed in real life, by a variety of factors, are through the process of artistic abstraction and selection, seen for what they really are, in the painting. This *showing*,⁹ which function is performed by the image on the canvas is analogous to the minor premise and the conclusion in the hypothetical argument constituting the objective side of supposal. Appreciating a painting is like

following an argument. Accepting certain conventions, the artist portrays the relationships between figures on his canvas. We may criticise the paintings by contending that within the framework of its conventions, it suffers from internal inconsistency or is lacking in cogency (the point the artist wants to make is not evident, i.e., the conclusion does not follow). Or our criticism may go deeper, we may attack the very conventions on which the painting is based. In all these respects, our procedure is analogous to the procedure we would adopt in appraising a hypothetical argument. And it seems to me that what applies in the case of painting, applies *mutatis mutandis* to sculpture.

The relationship between supposal and literature is obviously much closer than that between supposal and the other arts. This is primarily because literature makes use of language and it is a straight-forward business to see whether or not a literary work is modelled on the lines of a hypothetical argument. On the subjective side it is evident that as in supposing, a literary work is an answer to a problem in the majority of cases; in a few cases it may be just play as in nonsense rhymes, limericks and farces. A literary work demands from the reader (and writer) a temporary suspension of disbelief. This is particularly so in the case of drama, with its material aids to make-believe. The situation in drama is very like real life, its effectiveness partly stems from this fact, and yet we know at the same time that what we are witnessing is a play; it is the acting of a part, it is pretending, like Peter playing policeman.

Objectively considered, a literary work like supposal, makes its own unique assumption. A sequence of events is related and certain conclusions follow, sometimes made explicit, otherwise implicit, latent in the material.

That works of literature are instances of supposal seems indeed to be self-evident to me. But let me consider the types of cases which allegedly cannot be squeezed into the frame-work of supposal. It might be argued that in an historical novel, the question of supposal does not arise. The author does not say "suppose so and so"; he tells you that so and so was the case. Or again in a lyric poem 'The Wild Swans at Coole', Yeats does not say suppose; he tells you quite categorically,

"The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water,
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones,
Are nine and fifty swans."

And so on.

Let us start with the historical novel—say Scott. What we find is that a few of the chief characters and main incidents are drawn from history. Scott, however, uses his historical knowledge to create characters and situations to paint a picture of the period. In such an instance, it is fairly clear, the historical novel can be seen as basically a case of supposal. Scott in effect is saying to us in *Old Mortality*, suppose this is 17th century Scotland with a particular situation prevailing in the country in which there is a struggle between an exaggerated royalism and a fanatical religion David Daiches sums up the position in the following words:

"It should be said at the outset that as a historical novel in the most literal sense of the word—as an accurate picture of the state of affairs at the time—this is clearly Scott's best

work. Generations of subsequent research have only confirmed the essential justice and fairness of Scott's picture of both sides.

But we do not read *Old Mortality* for its history, though we could do worse. We read it, as Scott wrote it, as a study of the kinds of mentality which faced each other in this conflict, a study of how a few extremists on each side managed, as they often do, to split the country into warring camps with increasing bitterness on the one side and increasing cruelty on the other."¹⁰

The historical novelist, then, asks you to suppose that there were characters such as he creates and that situations existed such as those in which he places them. The background in which the characters act is not "supposed" or imaginary; it is in consonance with known facts. His main interest, however, is to show how, given certain situations and characters the plot would logically unfold itself as it did. Basically this is not very different from what the ordinary novelist does. He too has to place his characters in a social setting which is authentic and usually contemporary. Once in a while even the setting or the background may be unreal, as in Swift or Kafka. But then, this supposedly fantastic setting is believed to resemble in important respects the real situation in a particular society. It is in this way that allegory and symbolism work.

Lyric poetry is no doubt the expression of a personal experience. In an obvious sense, we can say that it records a fact. My contention, however, is that if we consider the lyric more deeply, we will find that the lyric poet is using his personal experience to draw attention to, or to *show* universal truths. In 'The Wild Swans at Coole' it does not matter whether Yeats was revisiting Coole Park for the 19th

autumn or whether there were fifty-nine swans or more. The essential point is that time and age had changed him while

“Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.”

In the last stanza, Yeats' thought moves from the swans and himself, to certain enduring patterns of life.

“But now they drift on the still water.
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?”

“This complex question”, writes Unterecker, “of the closing lines of the poem, (and many others Yeats will soon be asking) suggests its own mysteries; like that of the swans the pattern of man survives; yet “I”, awakening some day (into death?) will find the pattern of immortality “flown away” and myself (immortal?)”.¹¹

An interesting point which A. N. Jeffares makes about Yeats is as follows: “In the majority of Yeats' poems the initial impulse was a personal emotion, often written down in the first person. As he revised the poem Yeats often removed the direct personal statement and contrived to generalise the experience slightly”.¹² Commenting on this point, Mr. Jon Stallworthy, in his detailed study of how eighteen of Yeats' poems were written, in his book, *Between the Lines*, says “From an examination of the manuscript,

however, it appears that, although many poems spring from a subjective seed, they open out into an objective flower".¹³

All this of course may apply in this particular way only to Yeats. The suggestion that poetry (including lyric poetry) draws on personal experience to show universal truths, may be an over-simplification. Nevertheless it seems to me a plunge worth taking especially because of its implications for the evaluation of poetry.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

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2. R.G. Collingwood, *The Principles of Art*, Oxford, 1938, p. 194.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 142.
4. S. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, p. 46.
5. S. Alexander, *Beauty & Other Forms of Value*, Macmillan, 1933, p. 36.
6. J.L. Austin, *Philosophical Papers*, Oxford, 1961, p. 201.
7. S. Langer, *Feeling and Form*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959, pp. 31-32.
8. R. Fry, *Vision and Design*, Chatto & Windus, 7th Imp., 1957, p. 86.
9. Here and elsewhere I use the words *show* or *shows* or *showing* after the manner of Wittgenstein in his *Tractatus*. One of my basic contentions is that in science or philosophy we argue in favour of a point, in art we *show* it. The *Investigations* resembles a work of art rather than a philosophical treatise in so far as it is an attempt to *show* its thesis.
10. D. Daiches, *A Critical History of English Literature*, Vol. II, 1960, p. 842.
11. J. Unterecker, *A Readers Guide to W.B. Yeats*, Thames & Hudson, 1959, p. 132.
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13. J. Stallworthy *Between the Lines*.

Chapter IV

ART AND FEELING

Every one seems to be agreed that somehow, in some peculiar, unique way, feelings find expression in art and feelings are aroused in the enjoyment of art. If feelings mislead us in science and philosophy, if they are hindrances to efficient action, at least in art they find their justification. Art could not exist without them; in art feelings come into their own. But agreement vanishes as soon as we come to details.

In this chapter I want to address myself to two main questions: (a) In what way are feelings expressed in art? and (b) What is the relationship between the feelings we experience in ordinary life and feelings which we experience in the enjoyment of art? For instance, if listening to Chopin's *Funeral March* I feel sad, is this sadness like the sadness I feel when I hear of the death of a friend? If it is different, then what are the respects in which the two feelings differ?

To begin with, there is this word *feeling*, which for ambiguity is unrivalled in psychology. And yet the high priests of aesthetics in modern times, Clive Bell, Colling-

wood and Langer seem to have thought it quite unnecessary to explain what they meant by feeling. We have to be clear about the sense or senses of feeling which are relevant to our problem.

Ryle in his essay on 'Feeling' in *Aesthetics and Language* has distinguished no less than seven different senses of the verb to feel. He recognises that there may be several others. Ryle's main object in this essay is two-fold. He wants to show firstly that all these different usages cannot be assimilated to a single archetype; and secondly, he guards against the opposite error of supposing that the seven usages have nothing in common. His purpose is to trace the *family resemblances* and *differences* between the seven different usages of the verb 'to feel'.

Ryle not unnaturally, has carefully selected his usages of the verb to feel. These are: (i) the *perceptual* use in which we say that some one felt how hot the weather was. (ii) There is, what he calls, an *explanatory* use connected with the perceptual use, as when he says 'he felt for the coin which had got into the lining of his coat'. (iii) There is the *mock* use in which the condemned man already feels the rope round his neck. (iv) Then there is the sense of feeling a head-ache, where it means *having* a head-ache. (v) There is what Ryle calls, *feeling a general condition*, like feeling sleepily or feeling ill. (vi) We say sometimes, 'I feel that so and so is the case', and lastly, (vii) There is the usage in which we feel like doing something. 'I felt like laughing in church'.

Broadly speaking, we may say that the first five senses are variations on a theme, where 'to feel' is connected with having a sensation, or perceiving. It is perhaps true that these senses of feeling have some bearing on the psychologi-

cal make-up of artists. Artists are said to be more sensitive or more highly perceptive than others. The musician is sensitive to the harmony and dissonance of sound, the dancer to rhythm and gesture, and the painter to colour. The artist perceives things which others pass by unnoticed, and on many occasions it is through works of art that these facts come to the notice of ordinary people. It is evident, however, that these senses of the verb 'to feel' are not relevant to the problems we have set ourselves in this chapter.

Ryle's seventh usage, "feeling like doing something" is also quite clearly not relevant to our problems. But in the case of the sixth usage, 'feeling that so and so is the case'. Ryle mentions in passing that it is important for the artist, though he has not explained how or why this is so. We use the phrase, 'I have a feeling that so and so is the case' when I make a guess or when I have a hunch. In such cases I jump to a conclusion but I cannot explain the grounds for it. The phrase is used when the speaker realises that he cannot substantiate his claim and sometimes the implication is that he is far from certain of its truth. But whether I feel strongly, or just in a vague manner, that so and so is the case, the essential point conveyed is that I do not *know* the proposition. I am guessing or acting on a hunch or whatever you will. It is evident of course that poets often have hunches of this kind. Their philosophies are not instances of knowing but of "feeling that". We shall have more to say on this subject in our chapter on 'Truth and Poetic Evaluation.' In the present context we have merely to recognise this as another sense of feeling that is not relevant to the present discussion.

The sense of feeling which is important for us, is the sense in which we speak of *feeling* or *having* or *experiencing*

an emotion. Thus joy, sadness, love are examples of emotion. Feeling is sometimes used as a synonym for emotion. We say 'he was overcome with feeling' and this would be synonymous with 'he was overcome with emotion'. In such a case we could enquire: what sort of emotion overwhelmed him? The answer might take the form 'He was overcome by grief' or joy or surprise, etc.

In what follows I shall use the word feeling as equivalent to emotion. So, when I enquire, how is feeling expressed in art?, I am asking the same question as: how is emotion expressed in art? or how is love expressed in this poem?, etc.

It would perhaps be as well to be clear as to what we mean by a phrase like "the expression of emotion". The *Oxford Dictionary* tells us that by the verb to express we mean, 'represent by symbols as in mathematics; express one quality in terms of another; reveal, betoken feelings and qualities; and to put thoughts into words.' It seems from these examples that two different, though related, activities are included in the phrase 'to express'. Firstly, there is the notion of finding symbolic representation for whatever it is that has to be expressed. Thoughts may find symbolic expression in words and equally, one quality may be represented in terms of another, as when the area of a circle may be expressed as πr^2 . Secondly, the O.E.D. tells us that *to express* also means *to reveal*. True, we may reveal our thoughts by giving them symbolic representation through words. But often we do reveal or express our emotions in ways which cannot be described as symbolic. I may thump the table or raise my voice when I am angry; I may reveal my fear by running away. We shall find that philosophers have tried to explain how art expresses emotion in terms of one or other of these two usages.

The central proposition of Mrs. Langer's theory is that: "Art is the creation of forms symbolic of human feelings". This theory has its roots in certain views about symbolism which Mrs. Langer expounded in *Philosophy in a New Key*. Music, she maintained, was a special type of symbol and she tried to show how it could picture the life of feeling, feeling being read as equivalent to emotion. Subsequently in *Feeling and Form* this special theory of symbolism in music was generalised into a theory about art. It is certainly the most determined attempt in modern times to show how emotion is expressed in art.

Mrs. Langer maintains that anything which has meaning can be called a sign. This is used as a generic term. Signs are of two kinds: signals and symbols. A cry is a *signal* of sorrow or fear, laughter a *signal* of joy or of the apprehension of the comic and so on. If birds start twittering and monkeys start chattering in the jungle I can treat these as *signals* of the arrival of the tiger. These things *mean* that the tiger is at hand. This is one way in which meaning is conveyed. Meaning is also conveyed through symbols, such as language. In regard to language Mrs. Langer accepts Wittgenstein's theory of the *Tractatus* according to which language *pictures* facts. The picture shares with the state of affairs it pictures, a certain common form or structure and it is this which makes it a picture, a logical picture.

It is a limitation of this theory of language, that only those facts which can be pictured can be thought about, or talked about. Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent, says the *Tractatus*. According to Mrs. Langer what is inexpressible in the discursive symbolism of language is "subjective experience, emotion, feeling and wish, from which only symptoms come to us in the form of metaphysical

and artistic fancies".¹

The two basic assumptions, that language is the only means of articulating thought and everything which is not speakable thought is feeling, pave the way for Mrs. Langer's fundamental contention, that apart from the discursive symbolism of language, there are symbols of another kind which she calls *presentational* symbols. Presentational symbols are symbols of feeling and works of art are symbols of this kind. Presentational symbols differ from discursive symbols in several important respects. Discursive symbols have a vocabulary which are units of meaning. These meanings are fixed and definable or translatable. These units can be combined into sentences according to the rules of syntax; the meaning of the sentence is a function of the meaning of the words and the rules of their combination. And finally the meaning of language is always general. Even if you say "this is red", the word *this* can apply to any number of objects, "so that it requires non-verbal acts, like pointing, looking or emphatic voice inflexions, to assign specific denotation to its terms". Presentational symbols on the other hand have no vocabulary, they are untranslatable, and they cannot directly convey generalities. The meaning of "symbolic elements which compose a larger articulate symbol are understood only through the meaning of the whole, through their relations within the total structure".²

Let us suppose for a moment that there are presentational symbols. What reasons are there to believe that works of art are symbols of this kind? Are they indeed symbols of feeling? Mrs. Langer discusses this point at considerable length in the case of music. To begin with she disposes of the view that the emotional content of music can be explained on the assumption that music is a signal. If music

has an emotional content, she says, it *has* it in the same sense as language *has* its conceptual content—symbolically. Music is not the cause or the cure of feelings but their logical expression. Moreover this expression is not by means of “sound painting” as in some programme music. If music is to symbolise anything such as an event, a passion, a dramatic action, it must have a logical form which it shares with the fact symbolised. Mrs. Langer writes: “... that musical structures logically resemble certain dynamic patterns of human experience is a well-established fact”. She quotes Kohler for the view that “Quite generally the inner processes whether emotional or intellectual, show types of development which may be given names, usually applied to musical events such as crescendo and diminuendo, accelerando and retarando”. On the authority of the musicologist Von Hoeslin, Mrs. Langer says, the fundamental relationships in music are *tensions* and *resolutions*; and the patterns generated by these functions are the patterns exemplified in all art and also in all emotive responses. Wherever sheer contrasts of ideas produce a reaction, wherever experiences of pure form produce mental tension, we have the essence of melody.

Mrs. Langer's position can be summed up in the following quotation from *Feeling and Form*: “...what art expresses is *not* actual feeling, but ideas of feeling; as language does not express actual things and events but ideas of them. Art is expressive through and through, every line, every sound, every gesture; and therefore it is hundred per cent symbolic. It is not sensuously pleasing and *also* symbolic; the sensuous quality is in the service of its vital import. A work of art is far more symbolic than a word, which can be learned and even employed without any knowledge of its meaning; for a purely and wholly articulated symbol *presents* its import

directly to any beholder who is sensitive at all to articulated forms in the given medium".³

Most of the criticism directed against Mrs. Langer's theory has been devoted to her views of language. It does indeed seem strange that she should not have attempted to answer criticisms of the picture theory of language in view of the fact that it has come in for detailed investigation; its errors and limitations have been exposed, and many of its chief supporters, including Wittgenstein, abandoned it some two decades before *Feeling and Form* was written. It is not necessary to cover this ground here. Suffice it to say that it has been realised that the picture analogy had been pressed too far in this theory of language. The picture theory might indeed apply to simple sentences in some languages but it does not explain the many and diverse ways in which language is used. If then, ordinary language can be used for purposes other than describing the world of scientific facts, if it can be used to commend and condemn and also to express emotion, the need for the concept of a presentational symbol does not arise. What is explained by the idea of presentational symbols could be explained in terms of the functioning of ordinary language. However, let us see if this concept of a presentational symbol yields any clear ideas.

One point which strikes the reader is that despite all the pains which Mrs. Langer takes to distinguish discursive from presentational symbols, the fact is that basically they seem to be alike and to function in the same way. The whole idea of *logical structure* appears to be integral not only to discursive symbols but to presentational symbols also. Unless there are units and an arrangement or *form of representation*, there can be no *logical* picture. If a presentational symbol has no units or vocabulary, if it has no syntax or modes of

combination, I fail to see how there could possibly be a picture. These are the basic elements which go to make a picture. Mrs. Langer tells us that the work of art represents or symbolises by virtue of its logical structure. The fact is that the whole idea of logical structure is explained in terms of vocabulary and syntax. The presentational symbol has neither and the ordinary mortal fails to see how it has logical structure. If there are logical structures of more kinds than one, then we must be shown how at least one additional kind of logical structure is possible. This is not done and instead we find Mrs. Langer falling back on the idea of logical structure in discursive symbolism to explain the working of presentational symbols. In short there is a basic confusion involved in the concept of presentational symbols.

Talking about music is an extremely difficult affair. After we have expressed a few ideas on rhythm, tempo and the basic relationships between notes, we are driven to vague talk about *texture* and *colour* and then to still vaguer talk about feelings and metaphysics. In this haze of ignorance, metaphor and excitement one can comfortably contemplate the proposition "music embodies the life of feeling". But when you turn to a painting you experience emotion no doubt, a complex emotion in which wonder and joy are distinct ingredients, but you are puzzled if you are asked to find in it a "symbol of the life of feeling". A painting of Tagore's may bewilder you. You may marvel at the strange imagination which could produce a serpent out of the deletions effected on a manuscript. And the contemplation of the whole, the strange lines and colours suggestive of so rich a variety of patterns may give you joy. But it seems a trifle far-fetched to consider the painting as a symbol at all, still more far-fetched to find in it a symbol of emotion.

If then the work of art is not a presentational symbol in what other way can we conceive of art as an expression of emotion? It has been pointed out that an emotion is a cognitive experience. An emotion is always directed *towards* some object which you are aware of. If you experience fear there is always something fearful which you are aware of, real or imaginary; and if you love there is a loved object, even if the love is narcissistic and self-directed. Emotion occurs as a sort of tone or colouring to a cognitive experience. There are no doubt occasions when you may be aware of an object or think of something without emotion. But when you do have an emotion, it is not as it were a separate experience from the cognition; it is an emotionally affected cognition. You are aware of an object or you discern a fact fearfully or sadly or whatever it is. Being a tone or an over-tone to a cognitive experience, it is legitimate to speak of an emotion being inappropriate or misplaced. Psycho-therapy largely consists in trying to get a patient to realise that his emotions are mis-directed, misplaced or inappropriate. An emotion may be said to be mis-directed when the object to which it is directed does not exist—as in the case of hallucinations. Supposing you dislike a person because you believe (mistakenly) that he is undermining your authority in the office: this would be an instance of misplaced dislike or repugnance. The emotion would be dispelled as soon as you were convinced that the person was actually quite friendly and sympathetic. The idea of certain emotions being appropriate to particular situations and occasions, is common to societies and cultures. A military man is expected to feel respect in the presence of a senior officer—and even to demonstrate it by a salute. In some cases the injunctions may be clearly formulated and written. But in the vast majority of cases

there is the sanction of custom. "The notion of a certain fittingness or unfittingness in kind or in degree between emotional tone and epistemological object," writes Dr. Broad, "is plainly of the utmost importance to ethics and aesthetics".⁴

Let us now see how all this applies to emotion in art. Obviously, when a poet decides to write about a particular experience or a painter to do a landscape, he considers the subject important; otherwise he would not have selected it. What he has comprehended and wishes to present through his medium is charged with emotion. He writes his poem or paints his canvas. What he is doing, in effect, is to *show* you something which, in your concern with practical affairs, or because of a lack of perception or imagination, you had not noticed. Contemplation of the work of art gives you that cognitive awareness—surcharged with the appropriate emotional overtone—presuming of course that you have rightly understood what the artist intended to convey.

The important point to note, however, is that as in real life, so in art, the emotion expressed by the artist or experienced by the contemplator, is parasitic on some cognitive fact. Emotion is always expressed indirectly. In the hot sunny afternoons, his brain afire, Van Gogh looked at the fields outside Arles and applied paint to his canvas. He tried to represent truly *his* vision. Connected with this very particular vision was an emotional overtone. In so far as he was able to transfer to the canvas his particular vision (sometimes the work comes out differently from what the artist intended) he would have been able to reproduce the emotional overtone. If indeed a work of art is a symbol of feelings, it is so because it is a symbol of some cognitive fact to which the emotions in question are an appropriate or fitting

response. The fallacy of Mrs. Langer and those who follow her, is similar to that committed by the psychological hedonists in supposing that "pleasure" pure and distilled can be had for the asking. Pleasure, or particular pleasures rather, are dependent on desires being satisfied. So also is the case of emotions. Emotions are neither experienced nor expressed in a vacuum. Create a situation and in most cases emotion will follow.

Before we leave the question as to how emotion is expressed in a work of art, we have to deal with a closely connected point. It has been supposed by many philosophers, including the influential Croce, that emotion is somehow *embodied* in the work of art. Santayana says, beauty is pleasure objectified. This raises the question as to how emotion which always has to be experienced by a subject, can be objectified. Thus Mrs. Langer remarks that, "feeling that is not subjective presents a new paradox", and "the status of unfelt feelings which inhere in art objects is ontologically obscure".⁵

Mrs. Langer has of course tried to explain how, on the basis of her theory, feelings may be said to inhere in the art object. The art object is a symbol, just as language is one. And as discursive meaning inheres in a sentence, so emotions are *in* the work of art. We say the meaning lies in the sentence; where else will you search for it except in the words? In a like manner, it might be said, the emotion is in the presentational symbol.

It must be admitted that we often do speak in a manner which would suggest that an emotion is *in* the work of art. We say that the music is sad or gay. We speak of the agony expressed in Michel Angelo's Christ on the Cross. Does this force us to accept the "ontological obscurity" involved in the

idea of unfelt feelings?

Mr. Bousma has explained this question in a most amusing and penetrating essay entitled 'The Expression Theory of Art', included in the volume *Aesthetics and Language*. Broadly his conclusions are as follows. When we talk about emotions we tend to use language in two different ways. He designates them as the language of emotion and the language of language. The language of emotion makes use of metaphors connected with liquids. Emotions well up; sometimes they are frozen. Emotions burst out; they come in waves and torrents; occasionally there are gentle ripples on the surface of a pool. All these statements suggest a sort of reservoir of liquid emotions in the mind, with sluice gates which in normal circumstances, are carefully regulated. When we talk of individuals having emotions or expressing them we employ this metaphor in a manner appropriate to the context. When our attention shifts to the art object, we start using language in a different way; we employ the language of language. This implies the use of a different analogy, as Bousma points out, "Music 'expresses' sadness (art expresses emotion) as sentences express ideas". Sentences may 'express' ideas in two ways. When you read a sentence it may evoke or call up an image in your mind. A work of art may similarly evoke emotions—it may make you cry. But this cathartic view of how works of art express emotion is too naive for our metaphysicians. A work of art expresses emotion as a sentence expresses a meaning. The emotion in the one case and the meaning in the other case, are not tucked away in some one part or the other. The emotion in the work of art and the meaning in the sentence are like the life in a squirrel. It is everywhere, in each cell of the squirrel's body. We find, however, that this analogy

does not apply, for a sentence can be translated and two sentences can have one meaning. But a work of art cannot be translated, just as two squirrels cannot have one life.

The puzzle, the 'ontological obscurity' involved in supposing that emotions inhere in art objects, so Mr. Bousma points out, arises because of the use of two different metaphors. The first metaphor is that of a reservoir of liquid emotions in the human mind. The second metaphor is the metaphor of language, as a sentence *has* meaning, so the work of art *has* emotion. Caught between these two metaphors, using sometimes one and sometimes the other, causes the puzzle. In fact, however, neither metaphor applies; the first would seem to have no more validity, even in psychology, than the exploded story of the ghost in the machine.

How then are we to conceive of the art object as embodying or expressing an emotion? As we have already explained, emotion may be said to be "expressed" in art indirectly. The work of art *shows* a cognitive fact, the development and interplay of forces. In so far as the artist succeeds in *showing* these facts in their essence, shorn of irrelevance, clearly and accurately, to that extent he is recreating the circumstances of his own personal emotion and is making possible the experiencing of a like emotion by the appreciator. The artist *shows* a certain fact or reveals a state of affairs, and thereby, indirectly he expresses his emotions which were directed to that particular cognitive fact.

Let us turn now to our second main problem, the relationship between the emotions we experience when we witness a play or a dance recital or enjoy a poem and the emotion we experience when faced with situations in real life. This problem arises if we accept certain premises. Firstly, there is the premise that we do experience emotions in real life.

This would, I feel, be admitted on all hands except by extreme Behaviourists who contend that the concept of emotion should be banished from psychology.⁶ On this point there seems little risk in parting company with the Behaviourists.

Secondly, we have to accept the premise that whatever else they do, works of art do evoke emotion. The contemplation of a work of art does give rise to an emotion and Clive Bell maintains that it is from this emotion, which he describes as the aesthetic emotion, that every theory of art must take its start. While we would not agree with Clive Bell about the importance of aesthetic emotion in aesthetic theory, let us agree at any rate for the time being, that there is such a thing as aesthetic emotion.

What then is this aesthetic emotion and how does it differ from ordinary emotions?

Clive Bell makes two main points on this subject and we cannot do better than to let him make them in his own, racy, provocative way.

"All sensitive people agree", he writes, "that there is a peculiar emotion provoked by works of art. I do not mean, of course, that all works provoke the same emotion. On the contrary, every work produces a different emotion. But all these emotions are recognisably the same in kind; so far at any rate the best opinion is on my side".⁷ In short there is a class of emotions which may be called aesthetic emotions. Within this class there are also specific differences.

Aesthetic emotions are, according to Bell, different from what he calls the "emotions of life". Aesthetic emotion arises, on this theory, from the apprehension of significant form. Sometimes, if a person is unable to perceive significant form in a painting or a piece of music, he falls back on a

sort of counterfeit of the genuine aesthetic experience. "And so they read into the form of the work those facts and ideas for which they are capable of feeling emotion, and feel for them the emotion which they can feel—the ordinary emotions of life. When confronted by a picture, instinctively they refer back its forms to the world from which they came... Instead of going out on the stream of art into a new world of aesthetic experience, they turn a sharp corner and come straight home to the world of human interests".⁸

He throws further light on the differences between aesthetic and ordinary emotions when he comments on his own inability to apprehend significant form in music. He says: "Incapable of feeling the austere emotions of art, I begin to read into the musical forms, human emotions of terror and mystery, love and hate and spend the minutes pleasantly enough, in a world of turbid and inferior feeling".⁹

One difference between aesthetic and ordinary emotions which Bell notices, is that aesthetic emotion is "*more profound and far more sublime than any that can be given by the description of facts and ideas*"¹⁰ (my italics). And he tells us at another place that aesthetic emotion can be experienced only if you treat an object, a landscape for instance, as an end in itself, and not as a means to serving some end.

Aesthetic emotion, then, according to Bell, is evoked by the apprehension of significant form. It differs from the ordinary emotions of love, hate, terror, etc. Aesthetic emotions are not *drives* or *motives* as ordinary emotions are considered to be. Aesthetic emotions are *profound, austere, sublime*. Aesthetic emotions form a class; there are evidently several of them.

There are two fundamental and related concepts in Clive

Bell's aesthetics and these are the concepts of significant form and aesthetic emotion. Unhappily both concepts are left vague. When Bell talks about significant form it looks as if he is describing a characteristic or feature of a work of art, as one might describe the colour or the texture of a painting. But when you probe a little more closely you find he is merely telling you how he is using the words *significant form*. And that may explain, at least in part, why he says so little about it—he could hardly describe something which is not there! But in the case of aesthetic emotion this difficulty did not arise. If he had described in detail even one aesthetic emotion it would have helped us to see how an aesthetic emotion might differ from an ordinary emotion. If he had described two aesthetic emotions it might have helped us to see how one aesthetic emotion could possibly differ from another. In the absence of enlightenment from Clive Bell let us make an attempt to unravel this mystery on our own.

It has been commonly held among psychologists that the number of emotions which human beings experience is very large indeed. At various times the number has been put as high as thirteen hundred. At the same time, it is believed that the number of basic emotions is quite small. McDougall believed that the basic or primary emotions, each connected with an instinctive urge, are fear, anger, disgust, tender emotion, lust, wonder, subjection, elation, loneliness, craving (for food), possessiveness, creativeness and amusement.

As a result of combinations and permutations of these primary emotions you get the others. If there is a complex situation which arouses two or more instincts at the same time, the emotive response is also complex. The result is a secondary emotion. Examples of secondary emotions are

scorn, awe, admiration, gratitude and jealousy.

It is necessary at this point also to explain the concept of what McDougall has designated a *derived* emotion. There are, he points out, certain emotions such as joy, sorrow, hope, anxiety and despair, which are not connected with any particular instinct. These emotions arise in specific conditions, only if a strong impulse is already at work. Consider the example of the members of a mountaineering expedition, weather beaten, tired and hungry, who are straining every nerve to get back to base camp where they can expect food and rest. Such a group of persons could experience the derived emotions of confidence, hope, anxiety and despair. The derived emotions experienced by them would depend on the expected success in achieving their instinctive goal. The group might, for instance, be under the impression that the difficult bits of the journey had been accomplished and what remained were a couple of miles of easy walking. In this situation we could expect them to have feelings of confidence. But then unexpectedly they encounter a fresh snow slip in crossing which one of the party is injured. This slows down their pace, the light fades... and confidence gives place to anxiety. The above example illustrates the working of derived emotions. The main point, however, is that a derived emotion arises only if some instinct or instincts are already at work.

Aesthetic emotion seems to me to be a highly complex mixture including primary, secondary and derived emotions. What are the factors which contribute to this mixture? The basic constituents appear to be the following.

Firstly, there is some primary or secondary emotion such as fear or anger or tender emotion which is aroused by the art object. According to the Aristotelian tradition a tragedy

arouses pity and fear which we get rid of through a catharsis brought about by the climax. While fear is a primary emotion, pity is a secondary emotion. However, the point I am making here is that different works of art arouse different primary and secondary emotions. If tragedy evokes pity and fear, comedy evokes amusement. One basic component of aesthetic emotion is a primary and/or secondary emotion. Two aesthetic emotions may differ from each other because this component the primary or secondary emotion in one is different from the primary or secondary emotion in the other.

Secondly, the emotion felt is a sympathetic emotion or is a species of sympathy. The situation presented in the work of art, say, in a drama or a novel, to take the most obvious examples, is a situation for the characters, or it is, as in a poem, a situation for the artist. The appreciator is an on-looker. He does not face the situation and there is nothing which he is called upon to do.

Thirdly, there are the emotions of wonder, admiration and joy. These are evoked in all cases of aesthetic emotion. We see that the artist has accomplished something novel, surprising, wonderful and this evokes in us admiration and joy. I believe, and will argue hereafter, that admiration and joy, which are both derived emotions, are the most important elements in aesthetic emotion.

Let us now examine these three elements in aesthetic emotion in greater detail and see how aesthetic emotion, as so conceived, fits the facts of aesthetic appreciation.

Mr. Clive Bell has indeed made some sort of a rigid dichotomy between the aesthetic emotions and the emotions of ordinary life. But in ordinary parlance we speak of experiencing sorrow on hearing the news of the death of a friend. We also speak of Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony as

sad. A play can be as hilarious and jolly as a party. In drama and mime there are means for the direct and efficient portrayal of the ordinary emotions of everyday life. In Greek music the modes were supposed to represent the different emotions. Bharata's *Natya Sastra*, a work of the 2nd century A.D., which is the fountain-head of the Indian classical tradition for the arts, makes no bones on this score. The ancient Hindu thinkers recognised eight main emotions or *bhavas*. A precise vocabulary of movement and gesture was specified for the expression of each of these emotions in dance, drama and the plastic arts. In music there were the *ragas* or modes, each designed to express a particular emotion.

On this point, it seems to me that the ancient Indian thinkers and common sense are right and Clive Bell is wrong. Of course it could be that when we say that Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique Symphony* makes me sad, what I experience has nothing in common with what I experience when I say I am sad because my dog has died. That could possibly be the case; the word sad may mean entirely different things in these two contexts. We do for instance speak of a pudding as sad and by saying this we do not mean either that the pudding experiences an emotion or that it evokes such an emotion in the person who eats it. But this case cannot be explained away quite as easily as that. Audiences witnessing Satyajit Ray's film 'Apu Sansar' (The World of Apu) are tearful when they come to the part when Apu's wife dies and he roams about the country feeling lost and utterly forlorn. The physical concomitants of the emotion are the same in this case, as in those in which ordinary people experience sorrow over some happening in real life. We laugh, we cry and we may scream with horror in a cinema hall as we do in real life. We could no doubt invent an elaborate hypothesis to

explain away these similarities in our emotional reactions to works of art and to situations in every day life. Personally I prefer what appears to me the simple and adequate hypothesis of supposing that what we experience are the same types of emotions.

This common-sense hypothesis also helps us to distinguish one aesthetic emotion from another. The emotion we experience in listening to Bach's *Double Violin Concerto* is very different from the experience we have in listening to a symphony by Shostakovitch. Moliere's *Scapin* makes us jolly, hilarious; we come home from Anouilh's *Antigone* sad, pensive, puzzled by the mystery of opposing forces which surround man and his efforts. The aesthetic emotions are different and the differences are accounted for by the fact that one element in each mixture is different. In the Anouilh there is pity and fear and in the Moliere there is hilarity and laughter. As we noted earlier, Clive Bell has not told us how one aesthetic emotion differs from another. It is not easy to see how these differences can be accounted for on his theory of a complete dichotomy between the aesthetic and ordinary emotions.

We come now to the second notable fact about this complex thing, the aesthetic emotion. It has been commonly held that emotions constitute drives or motives for action. Thus A.F. Shand in *Foundations of Character*, says, "The emotions then are forces: they work in certain ways and in certain directions. They are within us to perform certain functions; though they often exceed their functions and are improper, imperfect instruments". He goes on: "And if in the course of our enquiry we come upon any so-called 'emotion', which is not such a force, which has neither impulse nor end... We shall for our purpose refuse to accept

it as an emotion, because it lacks the fundamental character of that class of facts to which we restrict the term".¹¹ This view has received support from more recent investigators. A slightly different view, and one towards which I feel sympathetic, is that of McDougall on whose theory emotions are an accompaniment to instinctive action, not themselves the causes of action. But on either of these views, wherever there is an emotion, there will be a drive towards some action or to the achievement of some end. In the case of aesthetic emotion, however, there is no impulse to action. We have been repeatedly told by philosophers, and we have ourselves subscribed to the view, that the art object is cut off from the achievement of practical ends. Aesthetic enjoyment is a species of pure contemplation. How then can there be such a thing as an aesthetic *emotion*? If emotion is a drive, to what does the aesthetic emotion drive us? And if emotion is an accompaniment to some purposive activity, it should be possible to describe and isolate this activity.

An explanation for the fact that aesthetic emotion, while remaining a genuine emotion is not at the same time an impulse towards action is, in my opinion, to be found in sympathy—primitive passive sympathy as McDougall has called it. It has been noted that among gregarious animals the expression of emotion by one individual of a group gives rise to a like emotion among others whose attention is drawn to it. Thus a cry of fear by one child will set other children crying, even though these children are unaware of the situation which has caused the first child to cry. Psychologists are fond of telling us that many of the "higher" social activities of man have their roots in primitive passive sympathy.

In the case of aesthetic emotion, it is evident that the

emotion experienced by the appreciator is a sympathetic emotion. In the case of drama or dance, it is the performers on the stage who face a situation, and it is they who initially respond emotionally. This gives rise to sympathetic emotions in the audience. In the case of poetry or music also the emotional response of the reader of the poem or of the audience can be seen to be similarly sympathetic. Only here the sympathy is with the creator of the poem or the piece of music.

The explanation we have offered is in accord with common usage. Some poets leave us cold and some musical compositions do so too. In such situations we say: "I am not sympathetic to that type of music" or whatever it might be.

The aesthetic emotion then, I would say, comes to us, as it were, filtered through sympathy. This explains the fact that aesthetic emotion is not a drive, nor is it associated with drives. True we speak also of active sympathy. Kohler tells how his chimpanzee, Diana, who had been quite friendly a minute before would fly at his throat in fury on hearing the cries of anger of other chimpanzees. Nevertheless, though sympathetic emotions may sometimes function as drives or be associated with drives, they are more often passive, at least in the case of human beings. The aesthetic emotions being aroused through sympathy can legitimately claim the title emotion, passive though they be.

The aesthetic emotions then include a primary or secondary emotion. This constituent will vary between one aesthetic emotion and another. We have found further, that the primary or secondary emotion included in an aesthetic emotion is invariably an emotion aroused through sympathy. We come now to a third notable constituent of aesthetic emotions. Aesthetic emotions include wonder, admiration and joy.

According to McDougall, wonder is the emotional accompaniment to what he describes as the instinct of curiosity. It is treated by him as a primary emotion. The work of art arouses our curiosity. What is it that the work of art conveys? How is the effect achieved? These are only two of the many questions which arise in our minds. And curiosity leads us back repeatedly to the same work of art. Each generation must appraise afresh in its own terms each of the great works of art and find something new in them which others had failed to discover. The wonder inspired by great art is eternal.

Two primary and related instinctive reactions to other persons are self assertion and self debasement. Assertiveness is the emotional accompaniment of the former as humility is of the latter. Admiration is what we feel in the presence of someone whom we recognise as superior to us. Humility is a part of it. But unless love and respect are added we do not get the full meaning of admiration. McDougall seems to think that admiration is always directed to persons. So, when you say, you admire this work of art, what you mean is that you admire the person who created it. Be that as it may, my contention is that the aesthetic emotion includes admiration as an essential element. Admiration, we must recognise, is itself a complex mental state including humility, love and respect. These last two are classified as sentiments, that is, highly organised and intellectualised emotions.

Finally, there is joy which McDougall also classifies as a derived emotion. A derived emotion, we have seen, can arise only if some primary or secondary emotion already exists—it rides on their backs as it were. We can, McDougall tells us, speak of the joy of a hungry man when dinner is an-

nounced. In such a case, however, joy is almost synonymous with pleasure and this is not an entirely apt use of the word. More precisely joy is the derived emotional concomitant of some strong and enduring sentiment. A sentiment, according to McDougall's well-known theory, is a mental disposition in which two or more instinctive urges, past experience and beliefs are knit together to form an enduring attitude towards an object. A sentiment, we are further told, involves a tendency to experience certain emotions towards particular objects. Thus one may experience patriotic emotion towards one's country. Such an emotion would have elements which are both secondary and derived. McDougall's contention is that joy is one such derived emotion; an emotion experienced in relation to an object connected with a sentiment.

This, then, completes my thumb-nail sketch of the aesthetic emotions. An aesthetic emotion is a complex state which includes some primary or secondary emotions which are evoked through sympathy. The fact that they are sympathetic emotions explains their passive character. Wonder, admiration and joy are its invariable constituents.

We have stated that the function of aesthetics is to lay down principles for the interpretation and evaluation of the arts. In this chapter we have discussed two main questions. Firstly, how is emotion expressed in works of art? To this our answer was that emotion is expressed indirectly through the representation or symbolisation of some cognitive fact. Secondly, we discussed the question as to what constitutes aesthetic emotion and how this differs from the emotions of every day life. The answer to this question has already been summarised above.

But what, it may be asked, is the relevance of these questions and the answers provided to the main functions of

aesthetics, namely interpretation and evaluation of works of art? The light which our discussion has thrown on these questions is certainly relevant, though it may be indirect. We have found, for instance, that emotion can be expressed indirectly, that is, only in relation to certain cognitive facts. It would follow that art without cognitive content will never achieve any high degree of emotional expression. Contrary to certain trends in contemporary painting, we may say on the basis of the above analysis, that there can be no emotional expression in an intellectual vacuum.

Although Clive Bell makes the aesthetic emotion the starting point of his theory of aesthetics, he has stated that the description of aesthetic emotion has no bearing on aesthetics or artistic appraisal. This seems to be an overstatement. A description of aesthetic emotion can help us in several ways. Firstly, such a description can help us to recognise an aesthetic emotion when we experience it. If aesthetic emotion is a guide to significant form, we should know how to recognise it so that we are not misled. By providing an analysis of aesthetic emotion we have named the criteria by which it can be distinguished from other emotions. Doubtless the fact that you or I may experience aesthetic emotion is no sure guide to the artistic merits of the object which occasions such a response. We may just be guilty of bad taste, we may be lacking in perception or may just fail to discriminate.

Secondly, the description of aesthetic emotion can help us in forming correct judgements by providing us with pointers to what we should look for and expect to find in a work of high aesthetic merit. Does the work of art touch our primary or secondary emotions? Can the contemplation of the work reasonably evoke in us feelings of wonder, of

admiration and of joy? The answers to these questions will certainly help us in the analysis and appraisal of works of art.

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Chapter V

TOWARDS A THEORY OF VALUE

In the second chapter we have contended that the first task of the critic is one of discovery. He has to give some indication as to the qualities of the work of art, some interpretation of what it is that he has found. In the third and fourth chapters we expanded on this theme and described the elements which go to the making of a work of art. We turn now to the second main task of the critic, namely, evaluation.

It has been argued by some that it is not the function of the critic to evaluate works of art. These people make a caricature of evaluation and then point out that to attempt any such thing would be foolish in the extreme. For instance, it is said that evaluation means drawing up a list of precedence. We have to decide who is the greatest English poet, who comes next and so on. If you are to evaluate a particular poet, say, Auden, you must fix his place in the hierarchy. Then you must dispose of his nearest rivals. You must draw a line between major and minor poets and so on. This, it is contended, is evaluation; and what could be more patently

fantastic.

But this is to suppose that evaluation implies exact measurement; that you cannot evaluate without at the same time assigning an exact measure of value to the object in question. I see no reason, however, to suppose that this is the case. On the other hand, it is possible broadly speaking to say that one work of art is better than another: that Eliot is a major poet and that Spender is not. The whole process of selection for anthologies and for purposes of education implies evaluation which persons of this way of thinking conveniently overlook.

In order to evaluate, we must know what we mean by value in general and we must know further what we are talking of when we speak of value as applicable to the arts. In making my position clear I propose to review briefly the chief theories of value advanced in recent years.

It is convenient to start with the views of G. E. Moore as expressed in that wonderful book *Principia Ethica*. Although this work has been before the public for over half a century, it remains a centre of philosophical discussion. In *Principia Ethica*, Moore distinguished between instrumental good and intrinsic good. We speak of something as being good as a means for achieving a certain end; but we speak also of certain ends as being good in themselves. It is this primary sense of the word 'good', or intrinsic value, that is the subject of our enquiry.

Moore pointed out that it is necessary to distinguish the two questions: What do we mean by 'good'? and What things are good?

Most philosophers did not clearly distinguish between these two questions. They set about trying to answer the second question and then, unwittingly, made statements

which were really answers to the first question. In doing this they fell into confusion.

Take the Hedonists for instance. When Mill spoke of the greatest good of the greatest number, he said that pleasure appeared to him to be the sole good. But at this point, perhaps, a doubt assailed him. In answering an imaginary critic who might ask what grounds he could produce for saying that pleasure was the sole good, Mill answered that the word 'good' had no other meaning, good *meant* pleasure.

Now Moore showed us in a classic example of fine logic that good cannot *mean* pleasure. For if good means pleasure then the statement that pleasure is good becomes a tautology. It says nothing; it is equivalent to saying that pleasure is pleasure.

In drawing attention to what he described as the naturalistic fallacy Moore was in effect pointing out that it was inconsistent to identify good or value with a particular natural quality and then to go on to argue that that particular quality was good and that various objects or states of affairs should be valued to the extent to which they exhibited this quality. What naturalistic moral philosophers did was something like this. They avowed that by good they meant nothing but pleasure. But surreptitiously they used good in another sense and it was this other meaning of the word 'good' that lent plausibility to their theories. Moore exposed their verbal jugglery, and contended that they would have to choose between two different lines of thought. On the one hand they could take the view that by good we in fact mean nothing but a particular natural quality. In that case, however, there could be no such thing as morality. On the other hand, if morality was to be preserved there must be

another sense of the word 'good', the sense which philosophers surreptitiously employed to make their theories look plausible. Moore's contention was that in this sense good meant just good. The word denoted a simple, indefinable quality. He added that good or value is a non-natural quality. Much time has been spent during the past half century in clarifying and assessing the adequacy of Moore's theory.

It is interesting to observe the types of arguments which have been brought against Moore's theory. Sometimes the criticisms seem to have arisen out of obvious and almost inexcusable misunderstandings. Coming from well-known philosophers, however, they deserve notice. In any case, right now we are concerned briefly in recording historical facts.

To begin with, it might be pointed out that when Moore says that good or value is a simple quality, like yellow, what he means is that to know a simple quality you have to experience it or perceive it. No amount of explaining can play substitute for the direct experience. For instance a blind physicist would know a lot more *about* yellow than you or I. He would know its place in the spectrum, its wavelength, and so on; yet that unique quality which is yellow would be unknown to him. Moore contends that good or value is simple and unique in this sense. The analogy with the colour yellow has led to some unnecessary complications. As I have said, the analogy was evidently in respect of one characteristic only; both value and yellow it was contended, are simple qualities. Professor Perry, however, took it that the similarities did not end here, and he commented by way of criticism that yellow is perceived by the senses, and value is not! Moore would describe yellow as a natural quality.

Part of what he means by calling good or value a non-natural quality is that it is not a sensuous quality. It is not a quality that is perceived by any of the five senses. This in itself is not a difficulty because there are things which we perceive by the mind and not by the senses. For instance we perceive that $2+2 = 4$, that any two sides of a triangle are together greater than the third, and so on. Value or good might also be something which is perceived in this way.

What Moore said about good or value was all right as far as it went. Value might be a simple non-natural quality. The trouble was that this did not take us very far.

Moore tried to throw additional light on this notion of value as a non-natural quality in his writings subsequent to *Principia Ethica*. Moore recognised that although value was intrinsic it was not what he called an intrinsic quality. This was perhaps an unfortunate expression; it is certainly puzzling to be told that good is intrinsic but is not an intrinsic quality, especially when it has been emphasised that good is a *quality*! Nevertheless Moore had drawn attention to a distinction denoted by these different sets of terms in one of his most difficult papers entitled *The Nature of Intrinsic Value*. However, I intend to follow Ross in describing this distinction as the distinction between constitutive and consequential qualities.

When we want to describe an object, we describe it in terms of its primary and secondary qualities. For instance, in describing a picture we state the size of the canvas, we describe the figure painted on it, we describe the colours. In this way, if we describe the painting in great detail, we might even succeed in giving a complete description of the painting. We should be describing it in terms of its constitutive qualities. These qualities go to make up what could

be called the intrinsic nature of the painting. But in giving this description we need not say a word about the value or merit of the painting as a work of art. In other words, although the value of the painting is a quality of the painting, it is not a quality which *describes* it or constitutes part of its nature. Hence Ross describes value as a consequential quality. If the painting is beautiful or has value, it has this quality because of its other qualities of size, shape, or colour, and so on. Value is a sort of parasite which is dependent on primary and secondary qualities.

This distinction between constitutive and consequential qualities immediately raised the question of the relationship between them. Moore's followers sometimes spoke of 'good-making' qualities.

I suppose it was not surprising that young philosophers started feeling dissatisfied with this state of affairs. What sort of quality is this which cannot be defined, cannot be sensed, and does not even describe the object which it is supposed to qualify? What point then is served by calling value a *quality*? The reaction to this point of view was voiced by the logical positivists, such as Professor A. J. Ayer, who contended that value statements are not really statements *about* anything. For instance, the sentence 'Love is good' looks very like the sentence 'This desk is brown'. Both sentences have the same grammatical form; but the value sentence, the logical positivists contend, is not a sentence which says anything. The value sentence only expresses the approval of the speaker. It is like an ejaculation. It is like the expression, 'Hullo, how wonderful to see you!', with which you greet an old friend who may turn up unexpectedly. The point of this sentence is that it expresses joy, it is not a statement. The logical positivists held that value judgements are

of this kind. They are expressions of emotion on the part of the speaker. They show approval or disapproval and are intended to persuade the listener to accept the attitude of the speaker. If I say 'Murder is evil', this expresses an attitude or an emotion of disapproval and the purpose of making such a statement is to persuade you to accept my point of view. Moral statements are a kind of propaganda.

I do not propose to undertake a detailed examination of the emotive theory, so ably advocated by C. L. Stevenson in his *Ethics and Language*. Basically Stevenson explains disputes on questions of value in terms of opposing attitudes taken up by different sets of people. While this may be correct, it does not follow that there is no dispute on the types of issues which we call moral or evaluational.

The logical positivists did not themselves maintain the emotive theory for very long. They felt that this theory was right in one important respect. A value judgement does have an element of approval or disapproval about it. It does express either a favourable or unfavourable attitude to something. However, at the same time, philosophers realised that this was not the whole truth about value. So, the latest views on value are an attempt to reconcile the emotive theory with the earlier theory of value as a non-natural quality.

Philosophers who present this point of view such as R. M. Hare of Oxford and Stephen Toulmin, go back to Moore's refutation of naturalism. Moore's contention, it will be remembered, was that it was a mistake to identify good with any natural quality such as pleasure, because if you did, then you could never say that pleasure was good. Hare and others point out that in everyday speech we not only use statements to describe things, we also use language to

praise and to blame.

Let us for the time being confine ourselves to the word 'good' and commendatory sentences which make use of it. Hare's point is that if we define good in terms of any natural quality then we would never be able to commend anything. Thus, for instance, we could not say 'Apu Sansar' (The World of Apu) is a good film. We could only say 'Apu Sansar' is a film which gives pleasure. In short we could only use language to describe the universe, we could never commend or condemn anything. If we accepted a naturalistic definition of good or value, we could not account for, or we would not be able to explain, that part of ordinary speech which is used to praise or blame.

For these writers, evaluation is equivalent to commendation or condemnation. When you say 'Pleasure is good' all you mean is that you approve of pleasure and you commend it to others. This is what they call the evaluative meaning of the word 'good', and this is what the word means in any context in which it may be used. But they also point out that when you commend anything, it is always reasonable to ask, On what grounds do you commend it? There are always criteria, there are always grounds, based on the natural properties of the object, on which this is done. For instance if an examiner says to his head examiner, 'This is a good answer paper', then he does so on the basis of certain criteria or characteristics of the paper in question. He might say, for example, 'Five questions have been answered, the handwriting is neat and legible, and the candidate has repeated, in relation to each question, exactly what is stated in the text-book'. These criteria on which approval and disapproval are based, are, however, not final; they change from age to age and vary in different societies. Hare and

his school of philosophers tell us that, while the evaluative meaning or force of the word 'good' remains the same, its descriptive meaning, that is the criteria of evaluation, is a variable factor. In a settled age, when certain conventions are well established, the word 'good' has a definite descriptive meaning.

It is this variability of the descriptive meaning of evaluative terms, of the criteria for judging moral action, that makes social and religious reform possible. For the reformer gives a new content to the old words of praise or blame—he changes the criteria for evaluation.

The question arises as to the nature of the relationship between the evaluative meaning of 'good' and the descriptive meaning of 'good'. Hare and his school tell us that the criteria of value differ from one society to another and change from age to age. How are we to know that one set of criteria are better than another? The neo-positivists answer this question in a rather strange fashion. They say that this depends on a decision. You have to decide that you will accept one set of criteria for evaluation rather than another, as, for instance, that you should love your enemies rather than hate them, or that monogamous marriages are to be preferred to polygamy.

It is suggested by these writers that this question, of what you take to be the content of good or value, is something for which no reason can be advanced. For instance, if you have decided that by a good answer paper you mean an answer paper which shows some originality rather than one which reproduces the text-book, you cannot prove to your head examiner, if he takes a different view, that your criteria are superior to his. You can at most show him how your criteria would affect choices on different occasions,

that if he applies his criteria in accepting Ph. D. theses, for instance, there will be no advance of knowledge, and so on. Ultimately, you can only present your conception of university education; but if he persists in keeping to his own criteria and applying them consistently, there is nothing that can be done about the matter.

It will thus be seen that there are at present two main theories or types of theories on value in the field. The followers of both groups are agreed that value statements are on an entirely different footing from descriptive statements. The intuitionists contend that this difference rests on two different orders of existence, the naturalistic and the non-naturalistic. They have, however, failed to throw any light on the nature of non-naturalistic qualities. (I am not dealing here separately with the idea of value as 'fittingness' which I consider a variation of the intuitionist view, subject in the end to the same weaknesses.) The neo-positivists, on their part contend that it is just a brute fact that particular groups or individuals commend certain things in preference to others. They contend that there can be no justification for such decisions. So in the final analysis an evaluative statement is a descriptive statement at one remove. Ethics becomes, for the neo-positivists, the sociology of the value judgements of particular groups. Present day ethical thought, as represented by the intuitionists and the neo-positivists appears therefore to have reached a dead end.

Having outlined some of the major exchanges between the intuitionists and the neo-positivists on value, I propose to outline my own position. I have three basic contentions:

- I. The model of the value judgement adopted by the intuitionists and neo-positivists alike has to be abandoned. The fundamental form of the value proposition,

- I contend, is an assertion of implication. Like a mathematical proposition, the value-proposition or value principle asserts an implication.
- II. The application of value principles to actual cases is complicated by the fact that value-situations are organic rather than atomic.
- III. Value is an a priori concept. It admits of degrees.

1. THE IMPLICATIVE MODEL

The impasse in the theory of value which we face today seems to me to stem from a premise which is common both to the intuitionists and the neo-positivists. Both groups of thinkers took for their model of the evaluative statement the proposition "This is good". This is a proposition in the subject-predicate form. The subject term in such a proposition can represent an object or a quality. The predicate is a quality. In such a proposition a quality is predicated of the subject. In other words, in an evaluative statement we are asserting that a certain object (or a quality) has or is characterized by a quality. In the case of Moore the point is made in a straight-forward manner in the first chapter of *Principia Ethica*. He says: "In all such cases some particular thing is judged to be good or bad: the question 'What?' is answered by 'This'".¹ Moore of course tells us that ethics cannot itself deal with particular, individual facts though it must provide reasons and principles on the basis of which particular questions of this kind can be answered. In the case of the neo-positivists the approach to the model statement is elliptical. The neo-positivists tell us that the primary question to be answered is: What should I do? or, What reasons can be given for preferring this action to that? The answer to this question is, according to them, dependent on

certain decisions in regard to principles. And these decisions, it is evident, take the form of statements such as "This is what we have decided to accept", or more simply, "This is good". My first point is that this is the wrong model and some of the major difficulties of both theories arise from the use of this model. I want to contend that the value proposition asserts an implication.

To begin with, what do I mean by *the value proposition*? This usage has to be distinguished from others with which it could be legitimately confused.

A treatise on value might distinguish between three types of propositions which it could be called upon to discuss. Firstly, there is a group of propositions which deal with the procedure proposed to be followed. For instance, when Sidgwick discusses his three 'methods' of ethics, *Intuitionism*, *Egoistic Hedonism*, and *Utilitarianism*, he is concerned with the question as to how an ethical or value proposition is to be certified. And as we know, Sidgwick held that hedonism and utilitarianism no less than intuitionism imply the acceptance of the self-evidence of some ethical propositions. When I speak of value-propositions or value-principles as being implicative, I am not meaning to discuss the type of statement which Sidgwick would describe as a *method* of ethics. For instance, I will not be concerned with a proposition such as "The consequences of an action should be considered in deciding whether or not it is the right action to perform".

Secondly, I do not mean by a value proposition statements concerning instrumental values. For instance, propositions such as "Yoga is good" or "The nationalisation of industries is good" or "Wealth is good" are statements which could in some sense be described as value propositions. But in all these cases the object in question is good

as a means to some end or other which might be considered desirable.

Thirdly, by a value proposition or a principle of value could be meant a statement to the effect that something or other is desirable in itself or is intrinsically desirable. It is statements of this kind which constitute value propositions or value principles *par excellence* and it is with these propositions that I shall be chiefly concerned. Value propositions of this kind, namely, assertions of intrinsic value, are implied by value propositions of the procedural variety and of the instrumental variety which I have referred to earlier. Thus for instance if you are to decide what factors are relevant to assessing the value of a particular action, this will be determined partly by what you consider to be intrinsically valuable. If rightness, for instance, is intrinsically valuable, the consequence of an action will not be relevant. If rightness is only a *prima facie* obligation as Ross held, then the value of following a rule will have to be offset against the consequences.

And finally, if, following Moore in *Principia Ethica*, right is defined in terms of good, then, the consequences of an action alone will determine the merit of the action. In the case of instrumental value propositions it is evident that they are definable in terms of intrinsic value propositions. Thus intrinsic value propositions are basic in the sense in which value propositions of the other two varieties referred to above, are not. Hence the importance of providing an analysis of intrinsic value propositions.

In regard to the intrinsic value proposition my contention is that it asserts an implication and like the mathematical proposition it is in fact a propositional function and contains variables. Russell has pointed out that in mathematics we

always assert that *if* a certain proposition p is true of any entity x or of any set of entities $x, y, z, \dots$, *then* some other assertion q is true of those entities. What is invariably asserted is a relation between p and q ; neither p nor q is asserted of the entity separately. Russell distinguished between formal and material implication and in his early years held the view that in mathematics what was involved was material implication. Later in *Principia Mathematica* he referred to this relationship as implication and what he meant by it was formal implication. We will have occasion to come back to this point later. We propose to refer to this relationship as *implication* in what follows.

To assert a value proposition, I am contending, is to assert an implication. It is equivalent to saying, for instance, that if it is true to say of X , p (that it is an instance of the enjoyment of the beautiful) then q (that it is good or valuable) is also true of X . This might be put in a shortened form as follows: "If it is true that X is an instance of the enjoyment of the beautiful, then X is good". Or to take another example, the statement "Pleasure is good" in its formal rendering would be equivalent to the assertion "If there is an X which gives pleasure, then X is good".

Recognition of the implicative character of intrinsic value propositions does not commit one to any theory regarding the analysis of fundamental concepts such as right and good. The examples given above assume that what is intrinsically valuable are certain states of consciousness. But the implicative character of value judgements would apply equally if we were to take a Kantian view of morals. For example, on an extreme interpretation of Kant's theory it may be contended that he had argued in favour of the practice of certain virtues such as truth telling, keeping promises and so

on, which are considered to be self-evidently right. If so, moral laws of this nature would be rendered as "If X is a case of speaking the truth, then X is right". On the other hand it has been argued that Kant laid down only three moral laws. These laws, which he claimed were alternative statements of the same moral fact, do not themselves constitute Categorical Imperatives but are criteria by which the rightness of particular actions is to be judged. These laws are commonly stated as follows:

(i) Act only on a maxim by which you can will that it at the same time should become a general law.

(ii) Act so as to treat man, in your own person as well as in that of any one else, always as an end, never merely as a means.

(iii) A principle of conduct is morally binding only if it is a law which a man imposes on himself.

Our interest in this interpretation of the Kantian theory is to see whether it fits in with the implicative character which we contend is essential to the value judgement. It is easy to see that this is so. For, Kant's first moral principle when translated into our terminology would read "If there is an action X such that it can be universalised, then X is right".

In short, I conclude that ethical principles both from the utilitarian and intuitionist points of view can be shown as conforming to the implicative pattern which I am urging is essential to all value judgements.

The idea that the value proposition asserts an implication between a property, or group of properties, and the concept of value assumes that there are synthetic a priori propositions. It is fashionable today to deny the existence of synthetic a priori propositions. Propositions, it is held, are

either analytic (tautologous as the more extreme positivists would have us believe) or empirical. According to them mathematics provides examples of propositions of the former variety and the natural and social sciences of propositions of the latter kind. Between them these groups of studies exhaust the sphere of meaningful statements. All other statements are pseudo-statements; they may be of interest as expressions of emotion but they say nothing.

The arguments for and against this view have been discussed *ad nauseum* in recent philosophical literature and it is neither possible nor necessary to recapitulate them here. Nevertheless an indication of one's own position on this vital issue is called for since it may help to place one firmly on one side or other of the fence, on several related questions.

It seems to me that the claim of the positivists that all *a priori* propositions are analytic is self-refuting. *A priori* propositions, it was held by positivists, are statements regarding the actual use of language. As Ayer said, "they call attention to linguistic usages of which we might not otherwise be conscious...". But then it is evident that *a priori* propositions are synthetic, not analytic. For they are statements as to how language is actually used. Such statements could conceivably be proved false, if some fact to the contrary turned up. Ayer admitted this in his preface to the second edition of his *Language, Truth and Logic* (p. 17) where he says: "I think that our view must be that what are called *a priori* propositions do not describe how words are actually used, but merely prescribe how words ought to be used. They make no statement whose truth can be accepted or denied. They merely lay down a rule which can be followed or disobeyed".

The revised interpretation of the formula that *a priori*

propositions are analytic then is that such propositions lay down a convention or a rule. If this is the case, there is no reason why I should subscribe to the convention. A priori propositions far from being necessary are seen to be purely arbitrary. Moreover the assertion "all a priori propositions are analytic" is itself either a synthetic a priori proposition or it is purely conventional. In the one case it is inconsistent with itself and in the other there is no compulsion to subscribe to it.

I believe thus that on logical grounds there is no antecedent objection to the view that there are a priori synthetic propositions.

Mr. Norman Malcolm, arguing for the view that all a priori propositions are analytic, has suggested a criterion to verify whether a particular proposition is analytic or synthetic. On the basis of this criterion he has tried to show that all the so-called a priori propositions are actually analytic. Let us take for example the proposition 'if X is red, X is extended'. Such a proposition asserts an a priori connection between colour and extension. Malcolm has suggested that if the method of verifying 'X is red', is the same as the method of verifying 'X is extended', then the relation between colour and extension is analytic; the meaning of one term is contained in the meaning of the other. Malcolm² maintains that the method of verifying these two propositions is the same and he takes this as supporting his contention that the connection between the concepts of colour and extension is analytic. It has been pointed out, however, that he has used the phrase "method of verification" in a very general sense and it is only if it is used in this way that his criterion supports his thesis. Thus in this case "method of verification" would mean only "verification through observation"

without further specification. For instance, I can verify the proposition "X is extended" in the dark or while I have my eyes blindfolded. But I obviously cannot verify the proposition X is red in those circumstances. On a closely specified interpretation, Malcolm's criterion would yield the result that the relationship between being coloured and being extended are not analytic. And this seems nearer the truth.

Malcolm's criterion may thus be a useful one for distinguishing between analytic and synthetic in regard to characteristics which we get to know through the senses but obviously its application would be limited to this sphere. It has further to be recognised that while this criterion can help us to decide whether the relationship between two concepts is analytic or synthetic, it in no way helps us to determine whether the relationship is synthetic a priori or synthetic empirical. This indeed is an important problem which has to be faced by those who are attempting to discover value principles.

A primary task in the philosophy of value is to determine what constitute value principles, i.e., propositions asserting relations of implication between certain concepts and the concept of value. We are not concerned here with establishing such a set of value principles. But one problem which has to be considered is the nature of the synthetic a priori relationship involved and whether any criteria for testing the validity of value principles can be established.

In his essay on *The Conception of Intrinsic Value in Philosophical Studies* Moore has discussed this question. Moore contends that if something has a certain intrinsic nature F, then it must have a definite value G. And if two things are exactly alike, i.e., have the same intrinsic nature, then it is impossible that one of them should have the value G and the

other have a value different from G. What is it that we mean by *must* and *impossible* in this context? Moore shows that by *must* in this context, we mean something different from the necessity of the laws of natural science. The laws of science apply in this universe and it is conceivable that the laws would be different in a universe differently constituted. We already know, for instance, that gravity does not apply in outer space; and we can well think of a universe in which causal connections are different from those which obtain in this universe. Moore thinks, however, that if something has an intrinsic nature, such as the enjoyment of the beautiful, and we recognise this as good, then it *must* be good not only in this world but in any other. The synthetic a priori connection between the intrinsic nature of an object and its value is thus different from the sort of necessity we come across in science.

Is this necessity then the necessity we find in logic? Is it like the assertion that if X is a right-angled triangle then it must be a triangle? To this, Moore's reply is that the connection between the intrinsic nature of an object and its value is not of this logical kind. It is evident that in this context Moore means by logical necessity what is meant by analytic necessity.

In short Moore is contending that there are three types of necessity. There is, firstly, logical necessity, the necessity illustrated by analytic propositions. Secondly, there is the necessity displayed by causal laws. And thirdly, Moore is contending that there is a kind of necessity, such as the necessary connection between the intrinsic nature of an object and its value. While we might broadly accept Moore's classification of three kinds of necessity we would have to point out that the second form of necessity is not exhausted by the laws

of natural science. Mathematical propositions and numerous others would be included in the category of necessary synthetic propositions. It may also be more correct to describe value principles as a sub-class of the class of necessary synthetic propositions.

Be that as it may, the question arises as to whether there is any criterion against which we can test the validity of value principles. Moore had suggested the test of isolation. What this test requires is that you should imagine a world in which there exists only the quality or state of affairs asserted to be good and nothing else. If your reason then judges such a world to be valuable or worthwhile, the test is deemed to have yielded an affirmative verdict. Thus, for instance, if we want to see whether pleasure is good, we should imagine a world in which pleasure alone exists and ask ourselves whether our judgement would pronounce such a world as good or worthwhile. In this particular case we know that Moore pronounced judgement in the negative, so that for him the proposition *pleasure is good* is false. On the other hand after applying the test of isolation, Moore declared that a world composed of human beings enjoying beautiful objects and nothing else, would be a desirable world. Therefore he maintained that the enjoyment of beautiful objects is an intrinsically valuable state of affairs. The test of isolation seems to be an attempt to apply in the sphere of value, a procedure of natural science. To establish a causal connection in science the procedure adopted is to isolate factors in the preceding events and then to observe whether or not the effect follows. That factor in the presence of which the effect follows and in the absence of which it does not follow, is taken to be the cause of the effect. Experiments are devised with this object — namely, of isolating the causal factors. Ob-

viously in the case of value, physical isolation through experiment is not possible. All that one can attempt is imaginative isolation and this is what Moore's criterion amounts to. While subjective bias cannot be eliminated through this process, we can see that the influence of other factors in determining our judgement is reduced to the minimum.

While the principle of isolation may be theoretically sound, the main difficulty lies in giving it a precise enough meaning to be able to apply it with consistency. For instance, as is well-known, Moore stated in *Principia Ethica*, after employing the test of isolation, that beauty was intrinsically good. Subsequently he modified this by saying that a world in which beauty existed but there were no human beings to appreciate it, would be of no value. So he contended a world in which there was appreciation of beauty, but nothing else, could be pronounced as valuable. But does this really make sense? Supposing a world in which nature with its wealth of primary and secondary qualities, does not exist; mathematical relations are not exemplified by objects, because of course objects do not exist. Can you imagine the existence of beauty in such a void? For me at any rate this is an impossible feat. On the other hand if you once start including in your imaginary world some of the concomitants of beauty, it becomes impossible to draw the line. In this imaginary world nothing remains isolated and the whole purpose is vitiated. It would seem, therefore, that Moore's principle cannot help us in establishing or testing the validity of the a priori statements of intrinsic value.

II. VALUE-SITUATIONS ARE ORGANIC

The value judgement then, I am contending, is an assertion of implication and further, like its mathematical counter-

part, it is a propositional function and not a proposition. The relationship of the value principle to judgements of value about specific cases is, however, a complicated matter. Every particular is concrete and is, therefore, not an instance of one quality or group of qualities alone. To continue our example of the beautiful, our value principle states that "If X is an instance of the enjoyment of the beautiful, then, etc.". Any particular concrete instance we find will, however, not only be an instance of the enjoyment of the beautiful. It will also be an instance of doing something, viz. enjoying the beautiful at a certain time, to the exclusion of other activities at that time etc. It might, for example, be an instance of enjoying the beautiful, when the children need attention at home and so on. Our judgement about any particular instance of the enjoyment of the beautiful will thus be complicated and the formula, if p then q may not be the only one that applies in the case before us. While the formula if p , then q asserts a necessary synthetic connection, the particular value judgement has to consider that the end product is the resultant of several such necessary connections acting jointly and limiting and determining each other.

In discussing the application of probability principles to induction, Professor Broad makes a remark which has relevance to our problem. The laws of probability, he says, are principles which hold in all possible worlds and do not depend on the special structures of the world that actually exists. Such laws can be of *practical* use if the real world is of a specified kind. "For example $2 \times 2 = 4$ holds in all possible worlds, but it would be very difficult to make any practical use of this proposition in physics if all objects in the actual world were like drops of water and run together into a single track when mixed".³ The composition of the real

world is such that principles of value cannot be applied like a rule of thumb to practical problems. Real situations are 'organic' rather than atomic and we have to be guided not by a single value principle functioning in isolation but by several all at once, limiting and affecting each other.

One advantage of treating value principles as propositional functions rather than as completed propositions is that it solves satisfactorily a difficulty concerning the relationship of value and existence. Critics of Moore tell us that it is not love which is good, but the existence of love which is so. As Everett W. Hall puts it:

"Moreover, value-expressions, as already argued, seem to have intentionally or non-assertively present in their meaning, the element of occurrence. What is taken to be good is some possible occurrence. Thus value is not ascribed to properties *qua* properties. It is the exemplification of the properties said to be valuable, the existence of something having them, that is taken to be good".⁴

According to our formulation, a value principle invariably takes the form, 'If there is an X etc.'. In short the implication between a property or a group of properties and value only holds *if* there is an existent which is characterised by them, that is, by the said property or group of properties. The implication of value is thus dependent on the existence of particulars which exemplify it.

III. VALUE AS AN A PRIORI CONCEPT

In what has gone before we have been assuming that value or good is a concept. It is one term in that assertion of implication which constitutes the value principle. To this I wish to add that it is a special kind of concept, namely, an a priori concept.

The late Professor J. L. Austin has warned us against the habit of asking for the meaning of a word. Sentences, not words, have meaning, if by asking for meaning we are asking for denotation. Nevertheless if we insist on asking for the meanings of words (which may have some legitimacy in a derived sense) this is a reasonable procedure provided we ask for the meaning of a particular word. The meaning of a particular word, such as "raciness" can be explained in two ways, syntactically and semantically. You explain the meaning of raciness syntactically when you provide an alternative word or set of words which could be used in place of the word raciness. You are explaining the word semantically when you describe the situation or place a person in a situation when it would be appropriate to use the word. But this procedure according to Austin becomes absurd when you ask for the meaning of words in general. Why a procedure which is appropriate for discovering the meaning of "particular" words should become absurd when applied to general words, is not stated. Examples of this absurdity are, however, provided and one is expected no doubt to applaud the humour and also find the argument self-evidently conclusive.⁵

Since precision is the essence of the whole procedure, I am tempted to enquire how particular a word must be for it to be legitimate to ask: What is the meaning of (the word)? It has been argued that no word is entirely specific and non-verbal signs such as pointing or other indications are necessary if a word is to be made particular. If this contention is valid, as I believe it is, then all words are to some extent general. To call a word particular or general is, therefore, a relative matter. The word "thorough-bred" is more particular than the word "horse" just as the word 'jade' is more particular than the word 'stone'. Austin's argument,

therefore, could have point only if he had given us a criterion for drawing a line between the generality of words about which it is legitimate and illegitimate to ask the question, What is the meaning of (the word)? No such criterion has been provided.

The words good or value I am contending, represent an a priori concept. And here again I am faced with difficulties raised by a powerful school who contend that there are no such things as concepts, empirical or a priori. To begin with let us distinguish between concepts and universals. By a universal I mean such a thing as "whiteness" supposing such things exist. Supposing universals exist it would be legitimate to enquire how they are related to objects. A concept, on the other hand, is a mental fact. It is something with which thought operates. I have a concept of a universal.

When we ask the question: what is an a priori concept? this in turn is said to involve two further questions. Firstly, do we "have" or "possess" concepts and if so, how do we come to acquire them?⁶ These questions may not ultimately be distinguishable from each other. This form of putting the first question is no doubt a little too closely associated with a certain analogy and treats concepts, as it does sensations and feelings, as constituting the furniture of the mind. This analogy, if pressed too far sounds ridiculous for we would then enquire whether it is possible for us to lose concepts as we lose other articles which we possess such as watches and pens. And also there can be a question as to when we come to possess them. But this difficulty need not trouble us if we realise that this is an analogical way of speaking. A distinction has been made between *dispositional* and *occurrent* ideas. Suppose I am thinking now of cocker-spaniels then I may be said to be "having" an *occurrent* idea of this breed

of dogs. But if I have had occurrent ideas of cocker-spaniels frequently enough, this gives rise to what is called a dispositional idea of them. I need not be thinking of them all the time but I can do so if the required situation arises. So "having" a concept means having this sort of dispositional capacity. If pressed one could answer the question as to whether concepts can be lost and one might even be able to say (roughly) when this happened. Old age and amnesia do indeed impair one's capacities to "have" concepts.

The question arises as to how we come to acquire or "possess" or "have" dispositional concepts. Hume contended that all dispositional concepts are arrived at through the processes of comparing and contrasting sense impressions. He argued that if he could show that there are no impressions from which an idea is derived, then this so-called idea is a meaningless idea, a verbal confusion if you like but no more.⁷ According to Hume all concepts are empirical since they are acquired as a result of abstraction and comparison of impression. So-called innate ideas such as the idea of necessary connection he thought he had exploded.

Whether or not Hume was right in his contention is a large question which we cannot enter into here. Dr. Broad, who has discussed this question with characteristic thoroughness and lucidity sums up his findings in these words:

"It seems to me then that the theory of Innate Ideas, when properly stated, is immune to all the ordinary objections that have been made against it, and that it may very possibly be true. It is of course most undesirable to postulate innate intellectual powers rashly and no doubt many supporters of the theory of Innate Ideas did this and made it a cloak for intellectual laziness and lack of analysis. But it is certainly not obvious that no powers except the general

powers of retentiveness, comparison and abstraction are needed to explain the formation of all dispositional ideas".⁸

Despite the finding, however, Dr. Broad does not accept the reformulated theory of Innate Ideas which he has defended and suggests instead, as simpler and adequate to explain the facts, what he calls a theory of non-perceptual intuition. What is required on this theory is the postulation of a general power in the human mind to perceive certain relations and qualities (structures as he describes them). Categories such as cause and effect, substances and ethical characteristics are among the things which are apprehended intuitively in this way. Non-perceptual intuition occurs when the senses themselves have been stimulated. When we sense colours, shapes, sounds and spatio-temporal relations, we also become aware of certain other qualities and relations which are not themselves perceived through the senses.

Dr. Broad gives the impression that this theory of non-perceptual intuition is something new and unusual. It seems to me, however, that it is at most a variation or a special application of a theme which is not only common but has been frequently discussed in recent philosophy. For example in his *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, Moore distinguishes no less than five ways of knowing. An important way in which we know some things is designated *direct apprehension*. By way of illustration Moore mentions that awareness of sense-data and awareness of the meaning of propositions are instances of *direct apprehension*. The relevance of this from our point of view is that the apprehension of meaning is an example of what Broad calls non-perceptual intuition.

So far I have attempted to clarify what could be meant by the words a priori concept and how concepts of this kind can be acquired. A priori concepts, I have tried to

show, can be acquired as a result of comparing and contrasting non-perceptual intuitions. If the concept of value is derived from comparing and contrasting sense impressions then it means that value is definable in naturalistic terms. I do not accept this analysis. I propose, therefore, to defend the view that value or good is a non-natural quality which I become aware of in non-perceptual intuition. When I talk of value as an a priori concept I am talking of such an idea arrived at through a process of abstraction and comparison of the data of non-perceptual intuitions.

In the earlier part of this chapter, however, I considered the historical stages through which the concept of value as a non-natural quality was discarded by philosophers. This indicated what I might describe as the *causes* of their dissatisfaction with Moore's view; it was not a justification of the criticism. What I need now is a vindication of Moore's theory against the main criticisms of the positivists. I propose, therefore, to defend and partly to modify in the light of criticism, the contention that value is a simple non-natural quality. I shall consider the exhaustive criticism to which this theory has been subjected in Everett Hall's book *What is Value?* with particular reference to the sections entitled "Is Value a first order quality?" and "Is Value a quality of a State of Affairs?"⁹

By first order qualities Hall means qualities which directly qualify particular objects. For instance, when I say "this table is brown", then in this context brown is a first order quality; it qualifies an object. In contrast with this are second order qualities, that is qualities which describe other qualities. For instance, if we say brown is a colour, then colouredness would be a second order quality, if indeed there are such things. The very awkwardness of this phrase

might tend to suggest a difficulty in the conception of second order qualities—and Hall's argument is that it is not plausible to hold that there are second order qualities. So-called second order qualities are essentially classificatory. The colouredness of red is not a distinguishable characteristic of red; rather it is to classify red. Colour is a determinable which exists only in determinate forms.

My purpose in referring to second order properties is, however, to distinguish them from first-order properties. Briefly Hall's argument attempts to show that value is not a first-order property, that is, it is not a property of a particular or an individual. His next step is to try and show that states of affairs do not have properties. If, then, he seems to argue, value is not a first-order property, it is not a second or higher order property, and further states of affairs do not have properties at all, then value cannot be a property or a quality since all possibilities have been exhausted. Against this I will try to show that Hall's analysis of states of affairs is invalid. States of affairs can and do have qualities. The sort of things that are described as first-order properties apply not only to particulars and individuals but also to states of affairs. Of course it may be objected that first-order qualities can, by definition be the properties only of particulars or individuals. But in that case the assertion that first-order qualities apply only to particulars and individuals becomes a tautology and all we have to do is to invent a new name for qualities which are properties of states of affairs. We shall assume, therefore, that when Hall says that first-order qualities are those which characterise particulars, he is merely giving an example of what he means by a first-order property. And this leaves it an open question as to whether or not first-order qualities can also characterise states of

affairs.

In defending the view that value is a first-order quality which characterises a state of affairs, I propose to reverse the order of treatment followed by Hall. I shall first try to show that states of affairs can have qualities. Thereafter I shall meet objections to the view that value is a quality and explain what sort of quality it is.

What then is a state of affairs? Hall in effect equates a state of affairs with a fact and then argues that qualities do not characterise facts. Facts are themselves the assertion of qualities in relation. In this context Hall uses *fact* in Wittgenstein's sense, namely, as whatever is the case. That so and so is the case, is what is meant by *fact*. As Hall puts it "... a state of affairs is any case of a quality's being exemplified by a particular or a relation being exemplified by a set of particulars. What question then is left as to the nature of a fact? There should be none. We should be able to say simply that a state of affairs is just uniquely this sort of thing. And such indeed is my position".¹⁰

I would agree with Hall following Russell, Wittgenstein and others that there are facts. The point at issue is whether it is correct to equate facts with states of affairs. Hall seems to be of the view that existents are either particulars, which can be named or they are facts which are descriptions and cannot be named. He, therefore, tries to dispose of the view that a state of affairs can be a particular. He contends that the supposal that a state of affairs is particular arises from two sorts of confusion. Firstly, confusion over the word 'particular' which can be used as a common noun to denote individual objects and also to denote a determinant under a determinable, e.g. as in 'magenta is a *particular* shade of red'. Secondly, a similar confusion arises over the use of

the word *concrete*. Thus while a state of affairs may be a determinate and may be referred to as *particular* or *concrete* in this sense of these words, it does not follow that it is particular or concrete in the other sense of these words, the sense in which an individual object is particular or concrete. Hall concludes that a state of affairs is not a particular; it must, therefore, be a description or a fact which cannot be characterised by qualities.

Let us now examine Hall's arguments. The basic question is whether it is legitimate to equate a fact with a state of affairs. It is certainly a fact that $2 \times 2 = 4$ but does this constitute a state of affairs? It is a fact that if A is to the right of B and B to the right of C then A is to the right of C. But I doubt if any one would say that this is a state of affairs. And I think it is easy to see that there are hundreds of things which can be described as facts which no one would dream of referring to as states of affairs.

Let me try and put this point in a different way. Hall admits the existence of particulars or individuals. There exist also qualities which they exemplify, and relations. But what about such things as social groups, the members of a mountaineering expedition or an army of a well-organised ethnical group. A state of affairs, *par excellence*, is something which obtains within a group, a group being constituted by at least two persons. We ask what is the state of affairs in the office or we say such was the state of affairs when the Chinese marched into Tibet. What constitutes the state of affairs is the individuals and the relations between them. We say for instance that "Of the 80 members of the expedition, 3 had lost their lives. The leader was suffering from frostbite and the two most experienced climbers were finding that the oxygen masks affected their vision. This state of affairs was not very

encouraging. In such circumstances the morale of the expedition was rather low". It seems to me that what is described here is a state of affairs. The state of affairs is constituted by the group and the inter-relations of its members. The state of affairs is not the *description, that so and so is the case*.

It is my contention then that in addition to particulars, qualities and relations, there is another class of existents comprised by groups. And a state of affairs, par excellence, is constituted by the complex of relations obtaining within a group. What holds groups together generally is some common purpose or objective. When we speak of a state of affairs there is an implicit reference to this common purpose of the group. For instance, if you ask the question: What is the state of affairs in the office? Then in a broad sense this is to enquire whether the group of persons constituting the office are satisfactorily discharging its normal functions. It is this implicit purpose or purposes which provide the framework within which the relevance of the answers is to be judged. Thus, in answer to the above-mentioned question you might say: the Superintendent's mother-in-law died yesterday. This would be relevant information if this event had affected the superintendent's work. But if the relationship between the superintendent and his mother-in-law was very remote and if her death had in no way affected him, then this fact would have no relevance to the state of affairs in the office.

States of affairs then obtain within groups. Whenever there is a group it is reasonable to speak of a state of affairs.

It is my contention that value is a quality which attaches to certain states of affairs. I have tried to show that there is nothing in the nature of states of affairs which makes it impossible to ascribe qualities to them. But in addition to states of affairs, value is also a quality of states of conscious-

ness. Whereas friendship or love, I would describe as a state of affairs, the enjoyment of beauty, knowledge and virtue I would classify as states of consciousness. And these latter three in addition to love and friendship, are grouped together by Moore as intrinsically valuable.

The next stage in my argument is to show that value is a quality and the sort of quality which can characterise such things as states of affairs and states of consciousness.

It has been common to suppose that there are three classes of existents—substances, qualities and relations. At various times philosophers have tried to get rid of one or other of the three. Empiricists have contended that there is no such thing as substances; monists have held the view that relations are mental fictions and have attempted to reduce them to qualities. On the whole the number of philosophers inimical to the existence of qualities have been few, though there has been an attempt to define quality as a monadic relation. For myself I shall assume the common view that the notion of quality is fundamental and indefinable.

Let us turn to the arguments produced by Moore's critics to show that value cannot be considered a quality. It will be recalled that when Moore said value is a simple indefinable quality like yellow, Perry retorted that is not a sensory quality. In defence of Moore, it can be said that the respect in which value and yellow are similar is that both are simple. The similarity was not to extend beyond this characteristic. However, it is interesting that Hall makes the same point as Perry. He writes: "It would seem that value is not a quality. For one thing it does not appear to be a sensory quality, like bitter or magenta".¹¹

Hall's argument would be valid provided it is the case that by quality you mean only a sensory quality. He does,

however, concede that value might be a quality belonging to a class of non-sensory qualities. But he no sooner asks himself this question than he answers it in the negative. "Speaking for myself, I do not find it in my own experience. Nor apparently do others, to go by what they say".¹² This, I am afraid, is a piece of naivety, which we can hardly take at its face value. Mr. Hall says quite categorically in the opening sections of his book that he works on the assumption that "in some sense there are values".¹³ He remarks again that his view is opposed "both to naturalism that deny outright that there are strictly speaking, value-expressions and to those that make all value-expressions redundant, i.e., properly replaceable by descriptive expressions". Also he points out that he upholds the objectivity of values though not the species of it which contends that "there are values outside human experience".¹⁴ Quite obviously then Mr. Hall *does* find values in his *experience*. No doubt the point at issue is to go one step further and to decide whether that experience is such as we can classify as the experience of a quality.

When Moore described value as a non-natural quality one point which he was intending was that it is not a *sensory quality*. But as I have indicated earlier, a difficulty arose because he said that although value is an intrinsic quality, it is not part of the intrinsic nature of any object. He went on to explain this distinction by contending that value qualities do not *describe* the objects in which they inhere. And here a quite unnecessary argument developed about what constitutes a *complete* description of an object. The more relevant question is as to whether a non-natural quality describes an object at all.

I am of the opinion that Moore's mistake consisted in saying, without qualification, that non-natural qualities do

Assuming then that the foregoing paragraph gives the ordinary sense of the word *describe* and correctly interprets Moore's views on the subject, the question arises whether value qualities are entirely non-descriptive. My own view is that this is never the case. Suppose for example that we have been to a dog show and on return my friend is trying to draw my attention to a particular exhibit. "You remember that cocker", he says, "shown by the gentleman in striped trousers, it was a very good one". I might reply "There were two men in striped trousers showing cockers. But I know the one you mean because in one case it was a very poor specimen of a cocker, so you must be referring to the other case. Yes—that was exhibit number thirty-three". Surely this would rank as a description of a dog. And in this context one must remember that one quality does not make a description just as one stroke of the paint brush does not constitute a picture.

It may be objected that a description in terms of value qualities is not specific. Moore set off a lengthy controversy by declaring that if a certain thing X has the value F, then any other thing which is *exactly* like X must always have the value F. This seemed to me an entirely pointless argument. Wherever value judgements have to be formed, two cases are never exactly alike, and this is what makes for complications and interest. In the present context the relevant point is that two different things may have an equal value and, therefore, value terms may not provide an *exclusive* description of an object. But then it has been argued that description in terms of natural qualities also never makes for exclusive description. Without pointing, descriptions do not succeed in being specific.

What then is the difference in the sort of description which

is given in terms of natural qualities and value qualities? I confess I am unable to see what it is. The only difference is that natural qualities are sensory qualities and we have acquired a certain capacity for ready detection and discrimination of such qualities. Scales have been devised for the measurement of some of these qualities. Instruments have been invented to improve our perception and discrimination of likenesses and differences in qualities which come under a single classification. All this has bred familiarity. But otherwise it is not clear how natural qualities provide us with a more specific description of objects than non-natural qualities.

Supposing, however, it is granted that there could be non-natural value qualities, the crucial question still remains as to whether there are such non-sensory qualities and whether we are able to perceive them or in any other way become intuitively aware of them? For myself I have little hesitation in answering in the affirmative. Take the relation, equality. This relation has the quality of being symmetrical, that is, whenever A is equal to B then B is equal to A. I perceive this quality of the relation equality but I do not perceive it with any of my five senses. So also with a number of qualities such as courage or loyalty.

It is time to pull the strings of this argument together. We have tried to show firstly that there is no reason to suppose that states of affairs and states of consciousness do not have qualities. Secondly that in an ordinary sense of *describe*, value qualities do describe objects in the same manner in which natural qualities describe them. Thirdly the fact that value is not a sensory quality is no ground for supposing that it is not a quality. Non-sensory qualities exist and can be directly apprehended by a mental disposition of non-per-

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ceptual intuition.

If we are to conceive of value as a quality, the question arises as to what sort of quality it is. We need descriptions of value and I believe we are being and can be provided with them. In so far as philosophers and others have examined the relationship of value to other qualities, and have dealt in the broadest sense with all that is covered by the phrase 'the logic of value-expressions', they are helping to describe value. This process, never complete, is the process of knowing. In a sense too we can agree upon a large body of facts *about* value, though we may not agree on the ultimate analysis of value. This would be as true of value as it is of yellow.

This is not the place to enter into a detailed description of value. But one general observation seems necessary. Value is a quality which admits of degrees. We can speak of one thing having more value than another and indeed in a large number of cases in which we are called upon to formulate judgements of value, what is required is a comparative judgement.

While value itself cannot be analysed in terms of *better* or the *better/worse* relation, I believe that *comparison* plays a part in a large number of value judgements. This comparison is made possible by the fact that value admits of degrees. There can be more value or less value just as a pot of water may be more hot than another. Moreover while value or good is a quality so also is disvalue or bad a quality. I make this point because Hall, along with others, seems to think that if value or good is a quality, then a difficulty arises about negative values or bad. He thinks that if good is a quality then bad must be a quality and somehow this constitutes a difficulty for those who hold that value is a quality. He says:

“(Moreover if good (positive value) be a quality, what of bad negative value)? It would seem only reasonable to suppose that it, too is a quality, unless one wished to hold the view that strikes all but theologically inclined neo-platonists as bizarre, namely, that badness is just absence of goodness. But if good and bad are both qualities, how are they related? Like sweet and sour or other Aristotelian contraries, that is sufficiently like one another to be classed together, but being the most dissimilar in their class⁶ This would require other value-qualities. And in any case we would seem to need a sort of contrariety or opposition here not furnished by positive qualities, however dissimilar”.¹⁷

Hall's statement is very compressed and calls for an examination of several premises which are assumed in the argument.

Let us start with the contention that good and bad must be contraries, sufficiently like one another to be classed together, but the most dissimilar in their class. Let us suppose that value admits of degrees, like sweet, e.g., this cup of tea is sweeter than that one. A third cup of tea may not be sweetened at all, a fourth may be slightly bitter and a fifth very bitter because some one may have put quinine into it. Similarly a state of affairs such as love between couple A may be highly valuable; the relationship between couple B may not represent a high degree of love or understanding but we might still regard it as good. The relationship between the couple C might be one of positive hatred. This we could regard as positively bad. I do not see what is incongruous or wrong with such a conception of good and bad or value and disvalue. This seems to conform to a pattern of known positive qualities, whatever may be meant by positive qualities.

But by the phrase 'other value-qualities' in the passage quoted, Hall may mean that there should be more contraries than just two, namely, good and bad. Just as sweet has for its contraries—bitter, sour, salt, etc., so good must have for its contraries not only bad but some other qualities also. I confess I am unable to see the basis of this contention. The prime contraries in the case of colour may be regarded from one point of view as three—red yellow and blue. On the other hand we might accept the colours of the spectrum and yet again we might say that a contrary of a shade of blue is a shade distinguishably brighter or darker. On this basis the number of contraries in the case of colour would be very large indeed. However, the point I am trying to make is that we cannot a priori say that in a particular kind of quality the number of contraries must be so many, and no more. We have to find out how many contraries there are. There is absolutely no basis for the contention that because in a particular case say, colour, there are X number of contraries, therefore, in other qualities there *must* be a like number too. Yet this is what Mr. Hall seems to be demanding in the case of value. It may well be that the sort of contraries in the case of value are different from those which we observe in the case of other qualities. But that is no reason for supposing that value is not a quality.

In conclusion I must emphasise again the importance which I attach to the implicative character of the intrinsic value judgement. Essentially this judgement is synthetic a priori, it asserts a relationship between certain natural qualities or characteristics and value. These natural qualities we find characterise only certain limited kinds of objects, *viz.* a few states of affairs and states of consciousness. Whenever we come across a state of affairs which has the requisite

natural qualities we can infer that it has the non-natural quality of value. The non-natural quality can itself be directly apprehended. But the necessary relation between the natural qualities and value provides a touchstone for verifying our intuitive value judgements.

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4. E. W. Hall, *What is Value?*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952, p. 16.
5. J.L. Austin, 'The Meaning of a Word', *Philosophical Papers*, Oxford 1961 p. 24.
6. 'Are there A Priori Concepts'? *Ibid.*, p. 9.
7. This argument of course is restricted to simple ideas. You can have an idea of a dragon, without having an impression of a dragon because you have impressions singly of serpents, of fire and of breathing.
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9. "Hall, in his prefatory remarks that he has devoted "a considerable part of his book to the question of value" quite decisively" the view that value is a property of things merits special attention.
10. E.W. Hall, *What is Value?*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952, p. 24.
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13. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
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15. Ed. P.A. Schilpp, *The Philosophy of G.E. Moore*, Northwestern University, 1942, p. 591.
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Chapter VI

AESTHETIC CRITERIA

In the last chapter I have argued that value principles or assertions of intrinsic value are statements of implication. Such implications, I have contended, hold between the ideas of certain states of consciousness and states of affairs, on the one hand, and the a priori concept of value on the other. Among the states of consciousness which are intrinsically valuable are those which are roughly described as the enjoyment of beautiful objects. These states of consciousness I would classify as aesthetic states of consciousness. When we talk of aesthetic value we are talking about the intrinsic value of those states of consciousness which involve the appreciation and enjoyment of the beautiful. It is the state of consciousness which is aesthetic and to which intrinsic value applies. In this context, *aesthetic* qualifies the object denoted; it does not qualify value. There are no *kinds* of value or species of value which we designate as aesthetic value, moral value and so on.

An aesthetic state of consciousness is the enjoyment of works of art which are really beautiful. In this statement

there are several points which require clarification.

Firstly, works of art, according to this view, do not have intrinsic value. What is intrinsically valuable is an aesthetic state of consciousness which has for its object a work of art which is worthy of admiration. A work of art which is not enjoyed by any one is in itself valueless. Works of art are instrumentally valuable in so far as they may, in suitable circumstances, give rise to what we have described as aesthetic states of consciousness. As will be evident, I use the words 'aesthetic consciousness' and 'enjoyment' interchangeably.

There has been some discussion as to whether an aesthetic state of consciousness can arise from the contemplation of nature. My own experience, gained while trekking in Kashmir, would tend to suggest that the enjoyment of nature resembles in several respects, aesthetic enjoyment. But a comparison of these two states of consciousness is not of interest to me here and I doubt that such a comparison would lead to profitable results in our particular field of enquiry.

Secondly, it is my contention, that while the enjoyment of works of art which are genuinely beautiful gives rise to states of consciousness which are intrinsically valuable, the enjoyment of objects which are unworthy will lead to states of consciousness which are valueless or even positively bad. For instance, the arrangement or lack of arrangement, of flowers in a vase, might reveal the absence of taste on the part of the person responsible for it. While we might deplore the absence of taste, such a situation would not be described as positively evil. On the other hand, the enjoyment of what is hideous or unworthy, would reflect a depraved consciousness which is intrinsically evil or bad. A state of aesthetic consciousness, therefore, can be intrinsically valuable only if it arises from the enjoyment of works of art which

are really beautiful. In this chapter we propose to describe the qualities which a work of art must display if it is to be considered beautiful, an object worthy of enjoyment or a fit object for an admiring consciousness. Such qualities will be designated aesthetic criteria.

The word beautiful, we have been told, has been so variously used that it has ceased to have any meaning. Anything from a Beethoven symphony to a stroke in tennis can be described as beautiful. Apart from indicating an attitude of approval the word, therefore, carries no positive content. I am prepared to accept this contention and have tried to avoid using this word. I use it here merely as a convenient form of short-hand for works of art which are *worthy of enjoyment*. The aesthetic criteria which I shall attempt to establish in this and the following chapter, would provide a positive content to this nebulous concept.

Our problem, then, is to determine the criteria which distinguish works of art which are worthy of enjoyment from those which are not worthy. One of my chief contentions is that while certain qualities are necessary if an object is to be worthy of enjoyment, no single quality is both *necessary* and *sufficient* to distinguish aesthetic or beautiful works of art from others. Thus, for example, I shall contend that order, simplicity, compactness, etc., are aesthetic qualities and that there cannot be a work of art which does not exhibit at least one of these qualities. On the other hand the presence of any single quality is not itself a guarantee of aesthetic merit.

To my way of thinking the idea of an aesthetic object is a complex notion which involves several aesthetic qualities. While the term *aesthetic object* has the same *force* in all its usages (to borrow a phrase from the neo-positivists), its

content differs in its application to the different arts. Thus for instance truth is an aesthetic quality which applies to those art-forms which make use of language, in the conventional sense of language, such as poetry, drama, etc. It does not apply to painting or music. Rhythm will apply to those arts where sequence is integral to the art-form itself and not to those in which the parts exist simultaneously with each other. Thus rhythm will apply to dancing, music and poetry but not to architecture. It is now common to speak of the rhythm of a painting or drawing. But here also if the word is to have any meaning at all, it can be relevant in an elliptical sense, where the lines of a drawing or the nature of the composition are suggestive of movement or where rhythm may be taken as equivalent to balance. However, these statements are intended as illustrative in this context. I shall have more to say about these terms later.

On the other hand there may be aesthetic qualities such for instance as *order* or *form* which apply to all the arts. Or again, there may be *compactness*, which you could look for and expect to find in a poem, in music, in a building or a Grecian urn.

It will thus be seen that aesthetic criteria will fall into two groups. Firstly a group of qualities common to all the arts, and secondly a group of qualities which are peculiar to individual art forms or groups of art forms. Incidentally the two groups include qualities which sometimes individually characterise non-art objects also. The term *aesthetic object* is therefore not defined because the aesthetic criteria listed are not both common and peculiar to all its applications.

It has been commonly held that unless we are able to provide a definition of art there cannot be any objective evaluation in aesthetics. The definition of art gives us those

qualities which are both common and peculiar to works of art and provides the criteria by which artistic merit will be gauged. If there is no definition there are no criteria and no means of objective evaluation. This view seems to be accepted among others, by Mr. Harold Osborne, who in his *Aesthetics and Criticism* writes, "We have mentioned from time to time that many works of art serve utility-functions, defining a utility-function as any purpose served by a work of art other than that of existing as an aesthetic object for appreciation. All such utility functions are served also by things which are not classified as works of art; none of them is served by all works of art and only by works of art. The proper excellence of works of art must therefore be something other than any or all the utility-functions which some works of art in fact serve; for if it were not so, there would be no sense or reason in classifying as works of art all and only those things which we do classify as works of art. The term 'work of art' would, in fact, hold no coherent meaning. If, on the other hand, the class of all works of art is a real class, composed of things which have some common property not possessed by things which are not works of art, criticism is clearly concerned, as we have said, with that common property which is their specific excellence as works of art. And from this it follows that the critic who writes about the utility-purposes served by individual works of art is not, in the strictest sense, writing criticism".¹ There are a number of points in this statement which call for discussion.

In the first place the distinction between art and non-art does not seem to be as clear-cut as Osborne would have us believe. Some art objects, he admits, serve a utility-function but their excellence judged from this point of view, is quite

irrelevant to their excellence as art. A house, he goes on to tell us in a paragraph just following the one quoted, may be comfortable to live in but it may also be in execrable state. Although I am inclined to doubt this, let it pass for the time being. But what I do wish to controvert emphatically is the view that a house can be a good piece of architecture and *not* a comfortable place to live in; so that in assessing the aesthetic or architectural value of a house *one* of the points for consideration is whether it *does* serve the utility-function for which it was designed. What I wish to emphasise is both that the utility criterion is one which we do and should apply, and also that it is only *one* of the criteria which is applicable. In this connection there are two points which need to be brought out. Firstly, as I have argued earlier in this book, the artist is faced with a problem which he sets out to solve. In assessing the merits of the work of art we cannot totally ignore the question: how successfully has the artist solved his problem? These problems may be of various kinds. Sometimes these problems are practical—as in the case of architecture. I have no doubt that Corbousier would be insulted if a critic intending to praise his work were to say, "The city of Chandigarh (capital of the Punjab, which he designed) is a most beautiful city but you cannot live in the houses nor work in its offices, nor understand one word which is said in its legislative assembly because the acoustics are poor". The fact is that aesthetic terms which appear to be purely formal and are fondly used by configurationist critics, are sometimes not as abstract as one might imagine. "Compactness" when you assert it of a house means one thing and in a poem quite another. When you assert it of a house, it is shorthand for a number of facts which go to make the house comfortable in all seasons of the year and economical

to run from several points of view which are important in ordinary life.

Sometimes the problem to be solved by the artist is not practical as in the above example, but it may be a matter of concern to others, as in the creation of a piece of music for a particular occasion. Handel's *Water Music Suite* springs immediately to mind. In assessing this work it would be absurd to apply the criteria applicable to a Beethoven symphony. The *configuration*, the *compactness* of the *Water Music Suite* can be seen in relation to its aptness for the occasion for which it was created.

And sometimes again the problem may be purely personal as it was for Yeats when he summed up his life in that gem of compactness:

"Cast a cold eye
On life, on death,
Horseman pass by."

The main point I am trying to make here is that a work of art is an answer to a particular problem and in assessing its merits we have to gauge the extent to which it is a satisfactory solution. But a satisfactory answer to a problem is not necessarily a work of art or a work of high artistic merit. To achieve that it must have other qualities besides.

There is a second reason for supposing that the distinction which Osborne makes between art and non-art, is not as clear cut as he would have us believe. A Rolls Royce car, a piece of pottery or philosophical works such as McTaggart's *Nature of Existence* or Plato's *Dialogues* may, when looked at from a certain point of view be considered works of art. This point of view is aptly described as the apprehending of an object purely for enjoyment. And what makes this enjoy-

ment of non-art possible, is the fact that these objects also exhibit certain qualities which characterise art objects. If indeed there were some one quality or even a group of qualities, common and peculiar to art objects, the line of demarcation between art and non-art would be clear cut. The fact that there is no such clear cut line supports the view I am advocating, namely, that it is the existence of several qualities together which makes a work of art.

To clarify my point further let me take the central notion of *configuration*, which Osborne and others of his persuasion put forward as the differentia of art objects. My contention is that although this characteristic is common to all works of art, it is not peculiar to them. It is for this reason, because they have *configuration*, that a Rolls Royce car, a vase and a Platonic Dialogue can, without undue violence to common language, be considered works of art. The *configuration* of these objects is integrally bound up with their function. What gives it its *configuration* is that the Rolls is a *motor car*. True, to be aware of its *configuration* and to give myself up to the enjoyment of it, I must have leisure to contemplate it. I must not *at that very moment* be in a tearing hurry to use it to get from one place to another. But this does not mean that its *configuration* can be abstracted from its utility function. Considering the importance which Osborne gives to the organic unity of the art object, it is a little difficult to see how its utility function can be totally ignored in assessing its artistic merits.

Having cleared the ground so far I propose to turn to an examination of formal aesthetic qualities. These qualities may be considered under two broad headings, those which are common to all art forms (and may be shared by some non-art objects also) and those which are peculiar to particular

art forms. The former, I will refer to as *generic* aesthetic qualities and the latter will be designated *specific* aesthetic qualities.

In the remaining part of this chapter I propose to discuss firstly what I take to be the generic aesthetic qualities. Secondly I shall consider the specific aesthetic qualities of poetry. In the next chapter I propose to carry this examination further considering the part which the concept of truth should play in the evaluation of poetry. My discussion is, however, intended as illustrative rather than exhaustive.

The most important generic quality of art objects is form. Form, I am tempted to say, is another word for order, but then I realise that certain types of order are not aesthetically pleasing. So I shall qualify it with the statement that form is aesthetic order. Order implies that there should in the first instance be a manifold, and secondly that this manifold should exhibit certain recurrent features or that there should be a pattern. The order or the pattern is what gives unity to the object; the manifold provides the variety. In any work of art there is a tension or balance between these two factors, the order or pattern on the one hand and the variety of the subject matter on the other. If order is to achieve aesthetic excellence and be worthy of being described as form it must have certain characteristics and avoid others which I mention below. It must be remembered that these characteristics may be present in varying degrees and art objects will therefore be capable of being graded. Some will be better than others and it will be difficult to draw a firm line and say at this point art begins and everything below it must be considered worthless.

If any order is to have aesthetic merit, it must be simple. In a sense it may be said that simplicity is inherent in the

idea of order itself, for order is the reduction of individual variety to certain types. Nevertheless it is possible to distinguish between two different forms of order on the grounds of simplicity. And my contention is that the simpler order has the greater aesthetic merit. This is a phenomenon which we observe not only in the arts but also in the sciences; we find that the simpler of two hypotheses is preferred—and what is more important, *the ground for the preference is recognised as aesthetic*. Referring to the way in which the Greeks interpreted nature, Susan Stebbing writes, "Their criterion was not moral purpose but beauty; their interpretation was determined by their aesthetic ideal of elegance, perfection and simplicity". This aesthetic element is present also in the familiar dicta of the Middle Ages: "Nature does nothing in vain"; "Nature works by the simplest methods"; "Nature seeks the shortest paths". "...Nevertheless the decision between conflicting scientific theories is still determined by aesthetic considerations. The choice is always between different *kinds* of order. The medieval order is replaced by an order the controlling principle of which is simplicity".² Newton's adherence to this principle is shown in his addendum to the first of his "Rules of Reasoning in Philosophy" where he says, "To this purpose the philosophers say that Nature does nothing in vain, and more is in vain where less will serve; for Nature is pleased with simplicity and affects not the pomp of superfluous causes".³ In discussing the criteria which theories of physical science must satisfy, Einstein refers first to the requirement of empirical confirmation. He goes on "The second point of view is not concerned with the relation to the material of observation but with premises of the theory itself, with what may briefly but vaguely be characterised by "the naturalness" or "logical

simplicity" of the premises (of the basic concepts and of the relations between these which are taken as a basis). This point of view, an exact formulation of which meets with great difficulties, has played an important role in the selection and evaluation of theories since time immemorial".⁴

My contention that one of the determining factors of aesthetic merit is simplicity or order could be amply demonstrated from the history of different arts.

Let us take for instance the contention that modern poetry is difficult which seems to me a genuine piece of criticism. This criticism applies as much to the subject-matter of modern poetry as it does to the form; I shall be concerned here only with that aspect of the criticism which applies to form. The form or order of the *Waste Land*, for example, is difficult to apprehend. The types of order which are illustrated by well-recognised verse forms, such as the regular stanza, rhyme and metre are not to be found in it. Initially the reader is bewildered. He can see no pattern at all. But with greater familiarity he comes to realise that there is a pattern, a complex pattern. The irregular verse, the difficult sentence structure, the rapid transitions based on emotional association rather than on logic, are all elements in this complex pattern.

Incidentally simplicity is not to be confused with the familiar for we might well come to see that a certain pattern is simple though in the beginning its strangeness may cause bewilderment. An example of such a reaction is provided by Hopkins. His contention was that though his verse might sound strange and bewildering in the beginning, it followed a definite pattern. The lines of a Hopkins sonnet could be scanned. The scansion of sprung rhythm is based on the stresses in a line, not on the feet as in the traditional rhythm.

And the argument that sprung rhythm is based on the rhythm of *speech*, was an attempt to show that it is not only familiar to all users of the English language, but also *simple*. What could be more simple than the rhythm of common speech since this is the actual practice even of the illiterate!

Just as an aesthetic order which is simple is preferable to one which is complex, in the same way merit lies in an order which is novel. Originality is a most important characteristic of aesthetic order or form. Through repetition forms become monotonous and over-familiar and cease to be aesthetically attractive. Surprise or amazement when we come across a new, a genuinely original form, is an important aspect of the aesthetic experience. In this context it is easy to see why there should be the craze for originality and novelty in the arts. But whereas a form may have the merit of being original, this originality may have been achieved at the cost of simplicity and/or other criteria. The ability to create forms which are both original and simple is the hallmark of genius.

Two other characteristics which works of art must display if they are to have any high degree of merit are coherence and compactness. I deal with these two qualities together since though distinct they are closely connected in their application. When I speak of coherence I am not referring to the supposed need for consistency in style or content between different works of an artist. I am concerned here with the internal coherence of a particular work of art. By coherence I mean that within the broad framework of a particular work of art, there are different elements or strands; these elements or strands complement and fit in with each other and contribute to one purpose or effect. An obvious example of coherence is provided by the fugue where the

"voices" provide the strands, each different and yet complementing the other against which its significance becomes apparent; and all these strands contribute to the unified purpose of the whole. In a novel such as Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* these different strands are provided by the Manette family in England, by Charles Darnay and Sidney Carton for one. A second strand can be discerned in the relationships between the Evremonde family, Dr. Manette and the Defarges. The contrast between old and new in social circumstances, between revolution and stability, constitutes perhaps yet another thread running through the whole story. The knitting together of these themes is the measure of the novel as a work of art. The question of coherence could not arise if there were not these separate strands. Again coherence would be jeopardised if the threads were such that they could not be brought together.

In most cases, however, lack of proper coherence results from the inclusion of irrelevancies and it is through the eschewing of the unnecessary or the superfluous that compactness is achieved. A work of art is compact if every part contributes in a definite way to the whole and cannot be deleted without considerable loss in significance. In a compact work there are no irrelevant frills. In this context it may be worth pointing out that compactness is not only an aesthetic characteristic of classical but also of romantic works of art. A certain degree of ornamentation, imagery, and rhetoric are part and parcel of the romantic conception of a work of art. We have to judge the work as a whole and then to consider whether the requirements of compactness have been met. The decoration or frills permissible in a romantic work might well be out of place in a piece conceived on more austere lines. This point is well brought

out by T. S. Eliot in his essay on Swinburne. To condemn Swinburne for being "diffuse" is to miss the point. As Eliot says "But the diffuseness is essential; had Swinburne practised greater concentration his verse would be, not better in the same kind, but a different thing. . . . You could not condense *The Triumph of Time*. You could only leave out. And this would destroy the poem; though no one stanza seems essential".⁵

It will be said that the two characteristics of coherence and compactness are not very different from what other writers have described as the organic unity of works of art. This is possibly the case. It appears to me, however, that it is difficult to give a precise meaning to the term organic unity. If a meaning is provided, the characteristic turns out to be empirically unverifiable and, therefore, useless in practical criticism. However, in view of the importance which has been given to the concept of organic unity in aesthetic theory it seems necessary to lay the ghost. Osborne who has been at pains to clarify this notion in his *Aesthetics and Criticism* starts from the definition provided by McTaggart. McTaggart had contended that an organic whole is *manifested* in its parts and the parts are a *manifestation* of the whole. But he uses the word *manifestation* in a special sense, not in the sense in which a microcosm mirrors the whole of which it is a part. According to McTaggart every whole has just the parts which it does have and manifestation of the whole in the parts means that if the parts or any part were different, the whole would also be different. McTaggart admits that on this definition anything which has parts is an organic whole, a symphony no more than a heap of stones. This is to reduce the concept to triviality. Broad's definition runs as follows. He writes: "I believe that other people who have

called a whole W an 'organic unity', have meant that W is such that no part of it could *have existed*, unless all the other parts had existed and had stood to each other in the relations in which they in fact did stand".⁶ Osborne thinks that this definition is both important and valid. He says "aesthetic objects are essentially wholes which possess organic unity in Dr. Broad's sense and that this organic unity is identical with the property which we are discussing when we speak of beauty".⁷ Osborne indeed thinks it necessary to correct certain facts about aesthetic objects on which Broad and McTaggart rely. This need not concern us here. The point of my criticism turns on the meaning of the phrase in Broad's definition, "no part of it *could have existed*, unless all the other parts had existed and had stood in the relations in which they in fact did stand". In so far as works of art are empirical objects, I confess that the contention that "no part of it could have existed, etc." is either false or the words have no application.

To begin with, however, there is a preliminary difficulty as to what we mean by a part of a work of art. In a musical composition such as a Beethoven symphony, do we mean the movements?, do we mean the subjects and their treatment in sonata form?, or do we mean the individual notes? In the case of a poem do we mean by a part the stanza, or a line, or each word? What is meant by a part will have to be defined and it is not evident how such a definition can avoid being arbitrary.

Let us suppose for the time being that by *part* as applied to a poem we mean the individual words. It is in that case patently false that no word of a particular poem can exist without the others. Suppose we contend that by a *part* we mean a line. What then are we to make of instances in which

a single line occurs in more than one poem. Think of Day Lewis' version of "Come live with me and be my love". Think of the different versions of the *Prelude* or the changes which Yeats made in several of his poems. On the surface at any rate the other parts of these poems continue to *exist* even if a particular line is changed or omitted altogether.

But I will be told, this is only a superficial view. The dogma of internal relations will be invoked to bolster up the contention that if one part is touched in the slightest degree, all the other parts necessarily undergo a change. This argument, however, leaves me cold. For the poem or other work of art is an empirical fact, and if changes in any one part result in changes in other parts and in the whole, then all these series of changes must be open to observation.

This brings me to my main contention that in talking of empirical objects such as works of art, the words "no part *could have existed*" have no application. Whatever may be meant by 'part of a work of art', we know that in a particular work certain parts exist and stand in definite relations to each other. But how can I possibly know that "one part *could not have existed* unless all the other parts had existed and had stood in the relations to which they in fact did stand". It seems to me evident that I cannot possibly come by any such knowledge and that the principle of organic unity is meaningless at least in its application to the arts.

In consonance with the view that works of art are empirical facts, the aesthetic characteristics discussed in the preceding pages are all open to observation. They are moreover implied in the actual appreciation of such works by critics. This at any rate is one merit which is claimed for the foregoing approach to the problem of appraisal.

Before turning to the aesthetic criteria which apply speci-

fically to poetry it is worth mentioning that the generic criteria themselves apply in a special way to each of the arts. While simplicity in a painting may be achieved through a few bold lines infinite in their suggestiveness, in poetry it will find expression through diction, verse structure, or possibly in the simplicity of the thoughts and feelings voiced. In the same way compactness in architecture would mean economy of design in terms of function. In poetry compactness is achieved through terseness of expression and by the use of images, which because of association *show* through a word or a line what might otherwise require several sentences to explain.

Although a great deal has been said by notabilities, such as Leavis and Richards, to belittle the importance of meaning in poetry, the vast bulk of literary criticism continues to be devoted to explaining what a poem means. When one turns to the formal qualities which make for excellence in poetry one finds that there is comparatively little which critics have to say. This is partly no doubt due to the difficulty of considering the form of a poem in isolation from its content; formal beauty being soaked into its meaning. Recognising that formal excellence cannot be separated from meaning, I propose to draw attention to certain general formal characteristics which are present in good poetry. There are, so I shall contend, two formal aesthetic characteristics, namely, (i) musical qualities and (ii) imagery.

(i) *The Music of Poetry*

It has been suggested that when we speak of the music of poetry we mean chiefly its rhythm. While rhythm may be the most important single factor contributing to the music of poetry, other elements cannot be ignored. These are rhyme, internal and half-rhymes, assonance, alliteration and

onomatopoeia. The refrain is coming back into favour as evidenced in the work of Eliot, Yeats, Auden, MacNeice and others. Pitch, though sometimes neglected, is latent in the context and needs to be brought out if the music of poetry is to be fully appreciated.

A structural comparison between music and poetry may be fruitful. Rhyme seems to correspond or to play a role in poetry similar to harmony in music.

Half-rhymes are rather like a dissonance or a declension as in Owen's well-known 'Strange Meeting':

"It seemed that out of battle I escaped
Down some profound dull tunnel, long since scooped
Through granites which titanic wars had groined.
Too fast in thought or death to be bestirred."

Internal rhymes, assonance, alliteration and onomatopoeia, are chiefly responsible for the melodic quality and texture of verse. In 'Look Stranger,' Auden seems to use most of these devices together to achieve his musical effect as in

"Look stranger, at this island now
The leaping light for your delight discovers,
Stand stable here
And silent be,
That through the channels of the ear
May wander like a river
The swaying sound of the sea."

Pitch though implicit is important in rendering the full meaning of a poem. The effectiveness of Hopkins' *The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo* depends on presenting the two echoes at differing pitches appropriate to each mood. The rapid changes of tone from flat statement, to cynical humour, to deep though restrained emotion in the *Waste*

Land similarly demand different pitches if the musical qualities of the poem are to be fully brought out. These facts are perhaps better appreciated in certain Indian languages such as Urdu and Hindi than in English where there is a living tradition of public musical recitation. Poets chant their poems as in recitative; and in such recitals the importance of pitch is transparent.

But after due weight has been given to these factors as elements contributing to the musical quality of poetry, it will be granted that rhythm is the basic ingredient. Rhythm is a temporal pattern formed by the succession of strong and weak elements and of pauses. Whether or not we merely perceive a rhythm in the poetry we read, or the reading causes us to become ourselves patterned, as Richards believes, one thing is certain. The rhythm of verse gives rise to expectation and makes surprise possible. In this lies its fascination. Due to its fixed structural pattern, the alternative ways in which a line of poetry can be completed are small in comparison with prose. After you have read three stanzas of the *Ancient Mariner* and the fourth begins "He holds him with his glittering eye", the metre and the rhyme scheme give rise to a definite expectation of what is to follow.

Some of the attractiveness of a poem arises from fulfilling expectations and some from giving the reader a surprise. A nice balance between fulfillment and surprise is of the essence of good poetry. Without surprise rhythm ends in monotony and without fulfillment there can be neither expectation nor surprise.

All poetry is to a greater or lesser degree musical. But each poem has its own music, a piece of free verse no less than the sonnet. In each case it is the music of the poem as a whole which has to be discerned, not the music of a stanza

or a line. Here it must be remembered that no poem would be melodious if it had no non-melodious parts which is perhaps more true of free verse than it is of verse written in accordance with fixed patterns. The musicality of a poem is achieved through the use of one or other of the devices mentioned in the preceding pages. The aesthetic value of the music of a poem, however, depends on the extent to which it is integral to the meaning of the poem. Music permeates or completes meaning: it is not something which is added to the meaning. Perhaps we should speak of music *in* the poem rather than the music *of* the poem.

The close relationship between music and meaning is well brought out in a report by Mr. G. R. Barne on a few programmes which Yeats did with the BBC. The intention was to bring out the musical qualities of poems through sensitive recitation, unaccompanied singing of refrains and by the use of a drum or other musical instrument. "...it was Yeats' way of saying lines that made these broadcasts memorable. In 'An Irish Airman' he made Clinton speak the lines "A lonely impulse of delight drove to this tumult in the clouds", as though he was experiencing the physical sensation of flight. "Ecstasy, Baddeley!" he would cry and repeat the lines lovingly to himself. The pleasure of rehearsal was to hear him trying to convey the sounds which were running in his head, and when he succeeded they remained unforgettable in the ear. The subtle differences of stress which separated the twice-repeated line "Seventy years have I lived;"...the rhythm of "And showed her hills green"; the tension of "I came on a great house in the middle of the night"; and lastly those wonderful refrains which he made Margot sing and which he longed to sing in some way himself: "The little fox he murmured, Oh, what of the world's

bane?" and "Oh what of that, oh what of that, what is there left to say?"⁸

(ii) *Imagery*

Assuming that imagery in some form or other is essential to poetry, we have to consider, how effectively imagery has been used in a poem. This seems to me a legitimate criterion for the evaluation of poetry. We must, therefore, examine the functions which imagery is called upon to perform.

One function of imagery, which has been much to the forefront in modern times, is accurate and detailed description. The Imagists' manifesto said "...we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal with vague generalities". And Eliot who has set the standard for so much in modern poetry and criticism both by his practice and in comment, has emphasised the poet's need to be concrete. Dante is lauded for his power to create clear, visual images. The crux of the whole argument is that the sensuous, vividness of experience, its emotional overtones can be conveyed through images and this is the chief, if not the only function of imagery in poetry.

The Imagists' manifesto no doubt had a point which was relevant in its historical setting as a protest against the watery sentimentalism of the Edwardian poets. But it placed unwarranted restrictions on poetry. While imagery is employed in all poetry, it is manifestly false to contend that images alone make the whole poem. Statement and narrative have their place and if this is not recognised poetry becomes synonymous with the short lyric and even parts of such poems would have to be ruled out of court. Quite apart from its bearing on the general question of what makes a poem, the imagists failed to recognise many of the functions of imagery. To make an experience concrete and vivid is

one function of imagery, but it is not the only one. The other functions of imagery have been examined and discussed in Rosemond Tuve's excellent book *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*⁹ on which much of what I have to say is based.

In the first place Tuve points out that although the conveying of sensuous vividness is recognised by the Elizabethans as an important function, it is achieved by methods other than accurate description. The formal characteristics of nature can be brought prominently and clearly into focus by some 'artificial' exaggeration. The poet slightly overshoots his mark in the image he selects or presents to drive home his point. Significant details may be picked out through imagery "to convey the living essence" of an object. And in this way "decoration" need not be considered as something 'artificially' added by images to the meaning of a poem.

It is natural to look for such examples of the use of imagery in the work of the metaphysicals. For it was the metaphysicals who were accused by romantic critics of "artificial exaggeration", though this view is no longer fashionable today. In selecting examples to illustrate this point, however, I have encountered two difficulties. Firstly, in much metaphysical poetry, a single image is presented and attention is drawn to various aspects of the image through several stanzas of the poem. The result is that it is difficult to find a good short example. Secondly, a single image is often used to serve many purposes at once; the measure of abstraction required for a good illustration may not, for this reason be readily available. Nevertheless, the following two verses from Donne's 'Hymne to God my God in my sicknesse' illustrate my point.

"Whilst my Physitions by their love are growne
 Cosmographers, and I their Mapp, who lie
 Flat on this bed, that by them may be showne
 That this is my South-west discoverie
 Per fretum febries, by these streights to die,
 I joy, that in these straits, I see my west;
 For though their currents yeeld returne to none,
 What shall my west hurt me? As West and East
 In all flat Maps (and I am one) are one,
 So death doth touch the Resurrection."

And lest it be suggested that this sort of use of imagery was the preserve of one school, I quote from Hopkins' 'Pied Beauty.'

"Glory be to God for dappled things—
 For skies of couple-colour as a brinded cow;
 For rose-moles all in stipple upon trout that swim;
 Fresh firecoal chestnut-falls; finches wings;
 Landscape plotted and pieced—fold, fallow and plough;
 And all trades, their gear and tackle and trim."

In this example, the poet seems par excellence, to *pick out* through imagery "the living essence" of nature in its variety and strangeness. Hopkins' stress on *inshape* implies this particular function of imagery. The apparent "exaggeration" and "artificiality" (Bridges lists these among Hopkins' faults) could be said to result from the abstraction involved in concentrating on certain details and neglecting others.

The images which a poet uses must not only be concrete, vivid and particular, they must also be significant, that is, they must have implications which reach out beyond what is purely personal and immediate. The image functions as

a microcosm which mirrors the universe. In this way the poet uses images both as sense and thought. Images themselves convey ideas. If the images are telling there is no need for comment or generalisation. In Wittgenstein's phrase, the picture *shows* its sense and as Tuve puts it, the images wear the universal in their faces.

An important ground for the complaint of obscurity, levelled against many modern poets, arises from their imagery. The associations which their images evoke, it is contended, are purely personal and this results in a failure of communication. The image may be concrete and vivid for the poet but it is not universal and therefore conveys nothing to the reader. It seems necessary here to distinguish between cases in which there is failure of communication because the imagery is *recondite*, from those in which the failure results from the imagery being purely personal. In the *Waste Land* and elsewhere in Eliot, the imagery is *recondite* but not, therefore, necessarily personal. Eliot for example says, "I Tiresias, though blind, throbbing between two lives,/Old man with wrinkled female breasts, can see" etc. And further he says, "I Tiresias, old man with wrinkled dugs/Perceived the scene and foretold the rest etc.". In these instances, some of the meaning suggested by the image of a blind decaying old man, who observes the frustrations of modern civilization, comes through even if we do not know who Tiresias was. The overtones of this image become clear when we learn that Tiresias, a character in Greek legend, takes on in this poem the liberating role of the Fisher King of the Grail legend. In any case the important point is that it is open to any one to find out in the usual way, what Tiresias signifies. In this case the image is *recondite* but it is not personal. On the other hand, an image may be both *recondite*

and personal. For instance in his 'Phases of the Moon' Yeats writes:

"Twenty-and-eight the phases of the moon,
The full and the moon's dark and all the crescents,
Twenty-and-eight, and yet but six and twenty
The cradles that a man must needs be rocked in: etc"

All this makes no impression on the uninitiated and is likely to leave one cold, even if one has mastered the significance of the phases of the moon as charted in 'A Vision'.

Yet again, one may come across an image which is too personal to effect communication and is in no sense learned; having merely psychological relevance for the poet himself. In Dylan Thomas' 'Once Below a Time,' you have not one but a whole cluster of images which are too personal to convey any meaning, concrete or otherwise: My silly suit hardly yet suffered for./Around some coffin carrying/Birdman or told ghost I hung./And the owl hood, the heel hide/Claw fold and hold for the rotten/Head, deceived, I believed my maker.

And finally there is the image which needs no elucidation, the image which is transparent, the image which wears the universal in its face as in Shakespeare's "Out out brief candle" or "All the world's a stage and all its men and women merely players".

However, it is worth bearing in mind that the transparency of an image is a relative matter. Whether an image will be understood and will transmit the meaning it is intended to convey, depends as much on the image itself as it does on the reader and a host of factors which describe the relationship of the poet to his audience. Some failure in immediate communication is inevitable if the links between the poet and

his readers are as diverse and tenuous as they are in the world today.

Imagery is often an aid to compactness and a source of ambiguity in Empson's first sense. What can be shown through one image or by the juxtaposition of images, would take several sentences to state, if it could be stated at all. This needs no exemplification. On the other hand, ambiguity as Empson defines it is any verbal nuance which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language. The holding together of the distinct possible meanings gives richness, heightens the effect and is thus "among the very roots of poetry". The first and most important of the seven types of ambiguity noted by Empson is exemplified in metaphor. Metaphor is that "synthesis of several units of observation into one commanding image; it is the expression of a complex idea, not by analysis, nor by direct statement, but by the sudden perception of an objective relation". Empson after quoting the foregoing from Herbert Read, goes on to say "Two things are like each other in several different ways and the mind plays upon these different likenesses and on their implications". The exemplification of likenesses is an important function of imagery.

The function of displaying ambiguity seems to correspond with one of the demands included in what Tuve describes as the criterion of delightfulness. An image delights us, Tuve seems to contend, because the use of it shows the poet's imaginative agility. The ability to see likenesses between disparate objects is ingenious and this ingenuity causes delight. Another and connected cause of delight is the suggestiveness of the image which can mean many things at once. These ideas as will be evident, seem to be included in Empson's idea of the ambiguity of metaphor. However,

it should be noted that the so-called "delightfulness" of imagery is a subjective response to imagery and is not a characteristic of the images themselves.

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Chapter VII

TRUTH AND POETIC EVALUATION

In the last chapter we examined the criteria which make for excellence in works of art. These we grouped under two heads. Firstly there are criteria which are applicable to works of art generally or at least to most works of art. These criteria are not, however, exclusive to works of art. Secondly we contended that within particular arts or groups, there are some additional criteria which apply. These we designated specific criteria and we discussed in detail those which are relevant to the evaluation of poetry. But we considered only formal evaluative criteria. We have contended that a major dividing line between literature and the other arts is provided by the fact that literature makes use of conventional language. At least on the surface it looks as if something is being asserted in literary works. The value of literary works will, therefore, be determined not only by the manner in which assertions are made but also by what it is that is asserted. Our evaluation of literary works will be affected by the truth or falsity, the importance or triviality of what they say. In this chapter I propose to discuss this

question with reference to poetry.

In recent times it has been suggested that there is no such thing as 'the problem of truth but merely a linguistic muddle'. The question as to whether truth means correspondence or coherence or usefulness is a pseudo-question. The argument appears to be that to assert a proposition 'p' and to assert that 'p is true' is to say the same thing. Thus 'it is true that there is a table in this room', says no more than 'there is a table in this room'. The phrase 'is true' is, therefore, superfluous. This seems to me to be an error. A proposition *claims* to be true; it has a truth-value. But it is surely a mistake to imagine that every proposition has the truth-value, true. The example cited above misleadingly suggests that the two statements 'there is a table in this room' and 'there is a table in this room is true' are about the same thing or assert the same fact. The latter statement is about a proposition, not directly about a state of affairs. The view that *truth* is a pseudo-concept, espoused by the logical positivists, is not maintained in precisely the same sense by the linguistic analysts today. Their latest move on this question is to admit that there is a difference between the two aforementioned statements. When you say such and such a statement is true, you are not *asserting* anything more than was asserted in the earlier statement. But you are *doing* something additional. You are affirming or sticking your toes in or whatever it is. However, I do not propose to pursue these niceties any further in this context.¹

In what follows I shall, therefore, assume the common-sense view that truth is a notion which is used to describe statements and beliefs which are in accordance with facts, facts both material and non-material.

To start off with, I should like to point out a sense of the

word truth in which it is commonly used not only about propositions and beliefs. This is the sense in which we speak of certain actions for instance, as being true of an individual. We talk of an action as being truly representative of a person, and of another as not giving a true picture of him. Strictly speaking, it could be maintained that these instances do not provide exceptions to the theory that only propositions and beliefs can be described as true or false. It is not my intention to try and prove that they do. I am perfectly willing to concede that what people really mean when they use these sentences is not that the action is true of the person, but that the proposition: this action is representative of the person, is true. And by this in turn they intend to convey that the action in question 'fits in' with what they believe to be the general character of the individual. If the action does seem to follow, in a particular set of circumstances from the character of the man, then it may be said, that the action is a sincere expression of his character. If the action does not follow, the doer must either admit the existence of a contradiction or else confess that his action is insincere.

For the time being this is the point which I wish to emphasise: that when people speak (loosely perhaps) of actions as being true or false, what they mean to say is that they are either sincere or insincere. In this sense, the word *true* is frequently used to describe poems and other works of art. I agree that in this sense the notion of truth is legitimately, if somewhat loosely, applicable to poetry. I agree also that whether a poem is sincere is relevant to assessing its aesthetic value. But I feel that this is not the most important sense in which the notion of truth is applied to poetry.

It seems natural to believe that propositions are asserted in poetry and if this is so the notion of truth will be appli-

cable to it. Dr. Richards, however, denies that truth is applicable to poetry. According to Dr. Richards, there is an important distinction between the emotive use of language and its scientific use, and the notion of truth is applicable to language in its second use alone. This is how he puts the matter. He says: "A statement may be used for the sake of the reference true or false which it causes. This is the scientific use of language. But it may also be used for the sake of the effects in emotion and attitude produced by the reference it occasions". Later in the same work, his *Principles of Literary Criticism*, he asserts that poetry illustrates par excellence the emotive use of language. He makes it quite clear that the notion of truth is not applicable to it. "It is evident", he says, "that the bulk of poetry consists of statements which only the very foolish would attempt to verify. They are not the kind of things that can be verified".²

In his statement of what constitutes the emotive use of language Dr. Richards makes a number of points not all of which can be treated with equal seriousness. He says for instance that scientific statements are *causally* connected with a reference or an object. This would amount to the contention that when I say "there is a table in this room", my statement is *causally* related to a certain fact, namely, the fact that there is a table in this room. The causal theory of perception is of course well-known. A discussion of its merits and demerits would take us too far afield in the present context. What Dr. Richards appears to be maintaining here is not merely a causal theory of perception, but based on that, a causal theory of meaning. This appears to be not only novel but also on the face of it highly improbable. I do not propose to examine such a theory here. The scientific and emotive uses of language can be discussed without

assuming that there is any *causal* connection between statements and the objects referred to by them on the one hand, and the emotional responses which they might arouse in the persons to whom they are addressed, on the other.

Apart from the supposed causal connection between reference and statement, Dr. Richards' statement is also ambiguous in certain other respects. What for instance does he mean by "a statement being used *for the sake of* the reference true or false which it causes"? (my italics). What do these words 'for the sake of' convey? We say: "I agreed for the sake of peace" meaning "I agreed so as to ensure peace". Or "Do this for my sake", i.e., to please me. When Dr. Richards talks of "making a statement *for the sake of* the reference" his usage seems to be a trifle odd. I take it, however, that he means that a statement may be used to *describe* a reference or to throw light on an object and we need not, therefore, treat this as a major stumbling block in his description of scientific and emotive statements.

Emotive statements are intended to create a certain emotional reaction in the persons to whom they are addressed. It is not quite clear from Dr. Richards' statement as to how the desired effect is brought about. This may occur in two different ways. Firstly, it may be supposed that the words uttered directly create a sympathetic emotional response in the audience. When we hear an agonised cry 'help' on a dark night coming from the neighbourhood, our emotional reaction to it may be said to be a direct response to the word. The 'reference' as Dr. Richards calls it, the situation or the state of affairs to which it might be said to draw attention is not known to the persons who hear the cry. The way in which animals respond to distant cries from a member of the pack is also an example of this sort of direct emotive

réaction.

Now the question arises whether our reaction to poetry is a direct emotive response to the *words* of the poem like the response of animals to the instinctive cries of members of the species? I do not think it takes much reflection to see that this is not the case. But if we want a considered answer to this question we will find it in Dr. Richards' own book *Practical Criticism*.³ An important conclusion reached by him is that in the majority of cases in which students failed to respond emotionally it was because they had failed to comprehend the prose meaning or plain sense of a poem. And what constitutes this prose meaning or plain sense? Quite obviously it is a "scientific statement" which describes or in other ways makes the "reference" clear. The emotive effect, therefore, is not created directly by the words of the poem but indirectly through the reference. If this is so it means that an emotive statement is a scientific statement (it conveys information or describes a situation) and it does something else besides, it rouses your emotions. But in that case it becomes extremely difficult to see why the notion of truth should be applied to poetry only by the very foolish. It becomes extremely difficult to see why we should not be able to describe a poem as false or true, while at the same time saying from a different point of view, that it is either successful or not in producing the appropriate emotional response.

The only reason which Dr. Richards gives for believing that the notion of truth is not applicable to poetry appears to be a practical one. He maintains that the reference in poetry is often vague and as such that it would be difficult to verify. But it is obvious that this is no refutation at all. From the fact that it is difficult to know the truth of a pro-

position it certainly does *not* follow that the proposition is neither true nor false. On the contrary this implies that it is not meaningless to ask whether a poem is true or not.

This brings me to Richards' contention that the reference in poetry is unimportant. He is in my opinion guilty of a vicious abstraction when he asserts that the scientific use of language is for the sake of the *reference* which it occasions, while the emotive is only for the sake of the emotional effects. The poet as far as I can see, is not trying merely to create a particular state of emotion in his audience. What he is trying to do is to show a relationship between certain external facts and certain emotions in his own person. He is trying to show that particular emotional states are 'appropriate to', or 'fit in' with an external situation. In 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci' Keats is not only, or even primarily, trying to create an atmosphere of hopelessness and desolation. He is showing the relation between these feelings and certain external facts: without the knight's tale the atmosphere would itself be meaningless. In short, without the external reference, the state of mind which might result from reading poetry would be no different from those states of consciousness which follow from the use of drugs. Indeed, as I have been arguing, emotions are cognitive experiences and arise (normally) through the awareness of situations. An emotion which is not directed to an object (real or imaginary) does not exist. In poetry also, the emotional colouring to an experience is parasitic; without a reference there would be no emotion at all.

Here I should like to state in passing that the objective reference appears to me to be as important in music as it is in poetry. In music too it is a particular emotion that one is supposed to feel in response to a specific situation; it is not

merely an emotion out of all reference to a context. I maintain that the general nature of the reference is made quite clear by the music itself. It is perfectly clear from the opening bars of the 'Unfinished Symphony' for example, that it presents a tragic situation, and that the chain of emotions which are presented, their subtle and rhythmic changes from utter despair to bitterness and tragic loss, culminate in a sense of victory and power through a larger synthesis of experience; the expression of these emotions, it seems to me, would be meaningless except in the context of the tragic situation. But although the reference in music is quite definite and clear, it is in my opinion general or abstract. To one who was unacquainted with Schubert's life the precise tragedy which occasioned this symphony would be unknown; it would, however, be definite enough that the situation pictured by it was a tragic one. It is in this respect that I believe that music is superior to the other arts. For while being able to show through abstraction, the connection between certain features of a reference and specific emotions, it does not bind the artist or the listener to the details of a particular context. In this way we can see the relevance of Plato's contention of the similarity of philosophy and music—for philosophy like music is concerned not with the concrete world of facts but with the world of forms.

There are no two uses of language as Dr. Richards contends. The difference between emotive and scientific language is the difference in the types of facts that they refer to. The function of science is to discover the relations which hold between facts, and to distinguish the unities which underly the diversity of phenomena. To be able to discover and state these unities, it becomes necessary to know the facts and this involves a mind. But in the situation created by

external facts and the knowing mind, science is interested only in the relations which hold between the external facts. Its object is to distil, from the experience as a whole, the precise relations which obtain between these facts. It aims at reducing to a minimum any effects occasioned by the subjective factor. To achieve this end science has developed a language of its own, a neutral language of symbols which is not tainted with the emotional colouring contributed by the subjective factor.

In art on the other hand, the subjective factor is important. The poet, for instance, is not trying to state only the relations in which external facts stand to each other, but also and importantly the effect they have on him, the subtle shades of feeling which they arouse. The difference between poetry and science, then is a difference between the situations which they attempt to picture. The situation pictured by science is the quantitative relations between external facts; that when presented in art is complicated by the subjective factor. It pictures not only the relations between facts, but also the differences in emotion and attitude which the external facts occasion.

If my contention is valid it follows that truth and falsity apply to propositions in poetry.

We must now enquire more closely into the manner in which a poem may be true or false. I have stated that poetry attempts to picture a situation which has two primary aspects—an objective aspect and a subjective aspect. The objective aspect is always more or less complex. Error may come in if what is asserted to be the relations connecting the facts in the objective factor are not the relation in which they actually stand; or if the objective factor does not occasion the emotional response which the poet claims.

To start with an error of the first type, take for instance the well-known lines from Wilde's "Ballad of Reading Gaol"—

"Yet each man kills the thing he loves,

By each let this be heard.

Some do it with a bitter look,

Some with a flattering word.

The coward does it with a kiss

The brave man with a sword."

Personally I feel that in these lines Wilde was hovering on the edge of an important truth which he misses through exaggeration. Psychologists have drawn attention to sadistic tendencies in human nature which are responsible for the infliction of pain on the loved object. This is one grain of truth in these lines. The other is the fine line which separates normality from abnormality, the socially acceptable from the reprehensible. Wilde certainly shows insight into human nature but he goes just a little off the mark. Be that as it may, the point I am trying to illustrate is that poetry does make assertions which are intended to represent states of affairs in the outside world. These descriptions may be true or false. If false they vitiate the whole poem. The poem then cannot evoke our sympathy or achieve its purpose. It is interesting that in editing the 'Ballad of Reading Gaol' for the *Oxford Book of Modern Verse*, Yeats omits the verse quoted above on the ground that it appeared to him to be artificial, trivial and arbitrary. If these lines are deserving of these epithets it may be because they are false in the sense in which I have contended.

An error of the second type would occur if the poet stated that a certain objective factor occasioned a particular emotional response in him, when in fact it did not evoke quite

that response. This is the type of error which explains the feeling we have when we say that the emotion of a particular poem appears to be forced. It also occurs sometimes if a poet fails to express the subtle atmosphere of a particular situation. Herbert Read has given a good example of what may happen. Read had a dream which he tried to portray in a poem—apparently with little success. This is what he said of it: "It was a failure in a personal sense because it did not nearly express the peculiar vividness and significance of the dream. It was a failure in a general sense because, as a consequence of its personal failure, it could not possibly convey the quality of the dream to other people. But most essentially it was simply a failure as poetry". And then the next sentence, which brings out the important point: "It might conceivably have been a success as poetry and still not have expressed or conveyed the quality of the dream". The poem in this case would be false in the sense that it would have described a general situation coupling a certain objective factor 'a' with an emotion 'b', whereas the emotion which actually occurred was, say 'c'.

It might be objected that emotions are after all a private affair; that what the poet feels in a particular situation he only can know. Consequently, when he couples certain emotions with a certain objective factor, it is not possible for the reader to call the poem false. It is not plausible for instance, for the reader to argue that he would not have felt that particular emotion in like circumstances, and therefore the poet could not have felt it. So that even if the poem is false in the sense that it does not picture the precise emotion which accompanies a certain objective factor, only the poet himself can possibly know this. In short, for practical purposes at least, the truth or falsity of a poem in this sense becomes

irrelevant.

This objection raises various points which have to be considered. First of all the objection assumes a peculiar relation, or want of relation, between the emotional responses of the poet and the common man. It assumes that the poet is different from the common man, that there is nothing common between the emotional responses of the two. It is on this ground that it is maintained that the common man cannot stand in judgement over the poet.

While admitting that there is a difference between the responses of poets and common men, it is necessary to enquire precisely where they differ and whether the differences warrant the conclusion which is derived from them.

In the first place the poet's emotion differs from that of any reader in the sense that the poet's emotion is not *the same emotion* experienced by the reader. In this sense a pain felt by the poet today is also not the *very same* pain which he experienced three days ago. I shall denote this difference by calling it an 'individual' difference of emotion.

Secondly, the poet's emotion may differ from that of the common man, 'specifically' in the sense that whereas both experience pain, the poet's feeling may be of a refined quality, such as exquisite pain.

Thirdly, there may be a generic difference, such that if the poet feels pleasure the common man feels pain.

And fourthly, there may be a difference of intensity of emotion. For instance, if a certain situation, such as observing the suburbs of London on a misty morning, evokes only a mild emotion in the average office worker, in a Lawrence it arouses an intense feeling which finds expression in a poem like his 'Suburbs on a Hazy Day.'

It is obvious that a difference of the first kind, which I

have designated individual differences cannot possibly be taken as a ground for the contention that the common man cannot stand in judgement over the poet. For if that were the case, the poet could not even make a common assertion about any two of his experiences; he could not for instance say that they were both instances of pain. In the same way difference of intensity of emotion are irrelevant to the issue. For one would necessarily be able to make a host of identically true statements about two emotions which differed only in intensity.

We come then to the question of generic and specific differences. I confess that if the poet's emotion differs generically from that of the common man then obviously it would be impossible for the latter to stand in judgement over the former. That is, if it is the case, for instance, that in circumstances when the common man experiences pain the poet feels pleasure. But also in that case it would be impossible for the common man to appreciate or even understand poetry. It is perfectly clear that this is not the case; our interest in the poet is certainly not the interest we display in the freak or oddity.

We come now to specific differences of emotion. And here I think the position is this. The poet differs from the common man in two ways. In the first place the poet is often able to feel shades of emotion which do not exist for the common man. We have all experienced the emotion of love but few perhaps have known that peculiar shade of it which Francis Thompson speaks of in these lines:

"I am but, sweet, your foster-lover,

Knowing well when certain years are over

You vanish from me to another;

Yet I know, and love, like the foster-mother."

In such a case the common man is in the position which he occupies when he is called upon to judge the work of experts. He can tell for instance that a certain theory is false. Where the expert contradicts his common experience he can judge him to be definitely false; where the experts' theory transcends his knowledge he must suspend his judgement. For while seeing that certain ideas are *possible* he is not in a position to know that they are definitely true.

In the second place the common man does experience the specific emotion felt by the poet, but his experience is vague and confused. The poet with his greater concentration and clarity of vision is thus in a position to point out to the common man certain nuances in his own experience of which he may not be fully conscious. But here again the common man is capable of standing in judgement over the truth or falsity of the picture which the poet or the artist presents.

And this I submit is the case. For is it not generally admitted that two of the important functions which the poet performs are to help the common man to discover himself and to widen his horizon by opening for him new possibilities of thought and feeling, if he has the imagination to follow?

The differences between the emotional response of the poet and the common man then do not warrant the conclusion that the latter cannot judge the truth or falsity of a poem. There is, however, a proviso, for we have seen that in certain cases the reader can know that a certain poem is definitely false, not that it is definitely true. But this is a difficulty which is not peculiar to the reader of poetry; in all spheres of knowledge it is far easier to show that a statement is false than to prove it to be true.

This brings us to the question as to how our evaluation

of a poem will be affected by the truth or falsity of the beliefs expressed in the poem. In our time this question has arisen in its acutest form in the case of Yeats. Critics are by and large agreed that he is one of the major poets of the English language. But his beliefs, which run counter to current ways of thinking, make them uncomfortable. Faced with this problem one group has tended to treat his beliefs as irrelevant to the evaluation of his poetry. Another group has agreed that Yeats' poetry, his interest in Irish nationalism and the occult, were all aspects of a single philosophy or attitude to life. Prof. A. G. Stock, one of the latest exponents of this point of view, contends that "although Yeats' beliefs and the power of his poetry are different things, great poetry does not grow out of insincere or flabby thinking." She sums up the position in these words: "They (Yeats' beliefs) do not matter, only in the sense that the reader need not mistake Yeats' faith for his own. The poetry would be impossible without them and in themselves they are neither incoherent nor ignoble nor weak, nor indifferent to the heritage of the race".⁴ Unfortunately, however, this does not answer the point at issue. Psychologically no doubt Yeats' poetry would be impossible without his beliefs. It is just a fact that the person, Yeats, who wrote 'The Tower', 'The Second Coming' and 'The Last Poems' was also the author of 'A Vision'. The use of the word "impossible" in this context is to raise a meaningless confusion in the mind. And while the incoherence of Yeats' system is important in judging its claim to truth, the other adjectives are certainly irrelevant, if capable of any precise definition.

What then is the connection between a poet's beliefs and our evaluation of his poetry? If we think the beliefs are false must that lower our assessment of him as a poet?

To begin with I should like to point out that we are faced with a similar problem in evaluating not only poets but also philosophers. Although it is evident that the truth of a philosophy is more immediately relevant to its evaluation than it is in the case of poetry, philosophers do not seem to have been as perplexed as literary critics by this problem. Russell has pronounced Leibniz a very great philosopher though he considers the *Monadology* a fantastic fairy tale and is unable to accept the premises on which it is founded. Again, C. D. Broad, who has little use for speculative systems, nevertheless thinks that McTaggart's *Nature of Existence* ranks among the greatest works of philosophy ever written. It would be instructive, therefore, to consider the grounds on which philosophers have been rated highly even though the philosophies propounded by them are believed to be untrue. Similar reasons might explain how we may think Yeats a great poet without accepting 'A Vision;' or how many non-Christians find Gerard Manley Hopkins' poems not only enjoyable but worth pondering over.

Let us consider a case in which a poet expresses certain views in a poem. He expresses these views because he holds a certain philosophy. We may accept the views expressed in the poem as true though we need not accept his philosophy, his premises. We might contend that these particular conclusions could be supported by quite different premises. This is something which is continuously happening in philosophy and when Whitehead spoke of all subsequent European philosophy as footnotes to Plato he was, I believe, intending some such thing. In the case of Yeats, it seems to me, that this analogy frequently applies. Take for instance the many poems in which Yeats summed up in such trenchant and telling verse the death pangs of the present civilisation

and the emergence of a new one:

"Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity."

And,

"Irrational streams of blood are staining earth;
Empedocles has thrown all things about;
Hector is dead and there is a light in Troy;
We that look on but laugh in tragic joy."

But if contemporary civilisation must go to its inevitable end,
'What matter? Out of cavern comes a voice,
And all it knows is that one word 'Rejoice'.

For,

"From marble of a broken sepulchre,
Or dark betwixt the polecat and the owl,
Or any rich, dark nothing disinter
The workman, noble and saint, and all things run
On that unfashionable gyre again."

According to Yeats' 'Phases of the Moon' and the 'Great Wheel' on which he plotted the history of civilisation, Christian civilisation will die and give birth to a new revelation by the end of this century. The idea of cycles in history is, however, not confined to Yeats and we could as well explain the "death pangs" of our civilisation on the basis of Spengler or Toynbee, or even in terms of the eighth

and ninth books of Plato's *Republic*. So far as the poems themselves are concerned, we can accept them as true and appreciate the clear-eyed perception of the poet. No doubt psychologically there is a connection between Yeats' own philosophy of history and the poems but the validity of his perception stands independently of this philosophy.

A study of the history of philosophy shows us that broadly speaking certain approaches to the subject recur. The basic Platonic philosophy of the real world as a world of ideas is repeated in Meinong and is embarrassed by objections similar to those raised by Parmenides, though stated in different terms. The views of Wittgenstein and his followers bear at least a family resemblance to those of Hume. A philosopher falls more or less into one of these well-defined types and his greatness is judged not in accordance with what we hold to be the truth or falsity of the philosophy he presents, but by his ability to grasp its essential characteristics, his ability to show the application of general principles to particular problems and the ability to find answers to the main objections. This simply reflects the fact that today we can no more be dogmatic about the truth of a speculative system or of the meaninglessness of such systems. Connected with these metaphysical approaches are particular emotional attitudes to life which find expression in poetry. And here also it seems to me that what is important is not what you or I believe to be the truth but the ability of the poet to *show* the philosophy in persuasive and moving terms. If we are looking for Plato we will find it in 'Adonais',

"The One remains, the many change and pass
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's shadows fly,
Life like a dome of many coloured glass
Stains the white radiance of eternity".

Mystical experience, for which metaphysical justification is sought to be provided in absolute idealism, finds perfect expression in Wordsworth.

Kant has argued with great force that moral action is motivated by the Good Will that "jewel which shines with its own light"—acting in accordance with the categorical imperative. Nevertheless he could not brush aside the obstinate demand of human nature for happiness, which finds morality divorced from happiness, unsatisfactory. To meet this requirement Kant resorted to the metaphysical pre-suppositions of God, Freedom and Immortality. Whatever the contradictions involved, Kant recognised the facts—reason tells us that we must pursue the good because it is good, and yet somehow human beings do go on looking for rewards.

"Thou art indeed just, Lord, if I contend
With thee; but, Sir, so what I plead is just.
Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse. I wonder than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? Oh the sots and thralls of lust
Do in spare hours more thrive than I that spend,
Sir, life upon thy cause. See banks and brakes
Now, leaved how thick! laced they are again
With fretty chervil, look, and fresh wind shakes
Them; birds build—but not I build; no but strain,
Time's eunuch, and not breed one work that wakes.
Mine, O thou lord of life, send my roots rain."

In this 'terrible' sonnet Gerard Manley Hopkins has surely epitomised Kant's problem.

Frequently a poet's philosophy consists in the acceptance

of certain moral values. What he in effect does in his poems is to suggest or recommend a way of life. This recommendation may be more or less explicit in the poem. It may be an easy optimism which asks you not to bother about the larger problems and to enjoy the moment:

"God's in his heaven
All's right with the world."

Or the communists' determination to fight and win happiness despite the odds,

"For I must wring a living from despair
And out of steel a song."

Or the defiant humanism of Russell's free man in a doomed world,

"Look thy last on all things lovely
Every hour."

This recommendation of a way of life may be looked at rather as an hypothetical imperative. If man and all that he cherishes is indeed doomed to extinction, then look thy last, etc. A critic may see the cogency of the argument and be prepared to accept it, so far as it goes. This will however, lead to the question "but how far does it go?". Is this particular assessment of moral values valid and is this the basis on which I ought to conduct my life?

In facing this question we must recognise that what is expressed in poetry is "speculative metaphysics". It has been argued that metaphysics is essentially an analogical way of thinking. It takes certain concepts drawn from experience and attempts to explain the whole of reality in terms of these key concepts or forms of order. The particular experience from which it starts is seen as a microcosm, a mirror from

which reality is projected as a whole. The metaphysician's task is to show how his key concepts or basic forms of order are capable of extension beyond the field of experience which suggested them. The twin tests of a system, Whitehead points out, are coherence and comprehensiveness. Incoherence, he explains, is the arbitrary disconnection of first principles, the assertion of independence between elements when the facts show themselves to be interconnected. An illustration of this is found in Descartes' notion of two kinds of substance, mind and body. By comprehensiveness is meant width of facts which can be explained in terms of a metaphysical system. Philosophers are continuously being faced with awkward facts which do not fit into their particular scheme. The failure of a metaphysics can be gauged by the manner in which it deals with such awkward facts. Mere dismissal is a sure sign of superficiality.

Before the twentieth century, metaphysical systems were supposedly constructed on the basis of *a priori* principles and arguments. Theoretically at least, finality might be claimed for such a system by its protagonists. Today, however, no one believes that a completely *a priori* metaphysics is possible. In the present context, then, must we view a metaphysical system as purely subjective, something about which it would be absurd to ask whether it is true or false. The answer to this question is necessarily complicated. Firstly we have to point out that the criteria of coherence and comprehensiveness themselves provide a check on mere vagary. The game of metaphysics has its own rules and a particular system can be counted out on the basis of these internal demands. Secondly, we must concede that two different systems need not be looked at as logical contradictions, such that we are bound to accept one as true and the

other as false. We may look at them rather as Hegelian categories as both partially true and also therefore as partially false. The test of a metaphysical system then would be not of finality but of progress. It seems to me that the poet like the metaphysician presents an outlook on the world, a perspective sustained by a scale of values or what he considers important. Like the metaphysician he "seeks to express some characterisation of reality, but necessarily with an omission of a vast range of detail, and necessarily also with some distortion due to his selective judgement of what is important. ...However simplified its form it need not be a straight-jacket confining that experience into a narrow frame-work of ideas. Its simplification may, like that of the cartoon, enable us to detect some important character or thread of coordination. The achievement of an intellectual form in which it can be exhibited is not the same as the hardening of a preconception, or the rationalising of a purely private impression".⁵

If then we accept this view of metaphysics and agree also that what poetry expresses is a metaphysic, we see that our evaluation of the poet's beliefs has to be undertaken in a new perspective. We see that it is no longer reasonable to ask: is this view true, if we expect the answer to take the form of a simple yes or no. On the other hand it would be more reasonable to ask the question: how true is this poet's philosophy or how far does it go? The answer could not be given in any precise terms. But broadly it would involve a comparison with other views and an assessment of the poet's grasp of some basic pattern of experience.

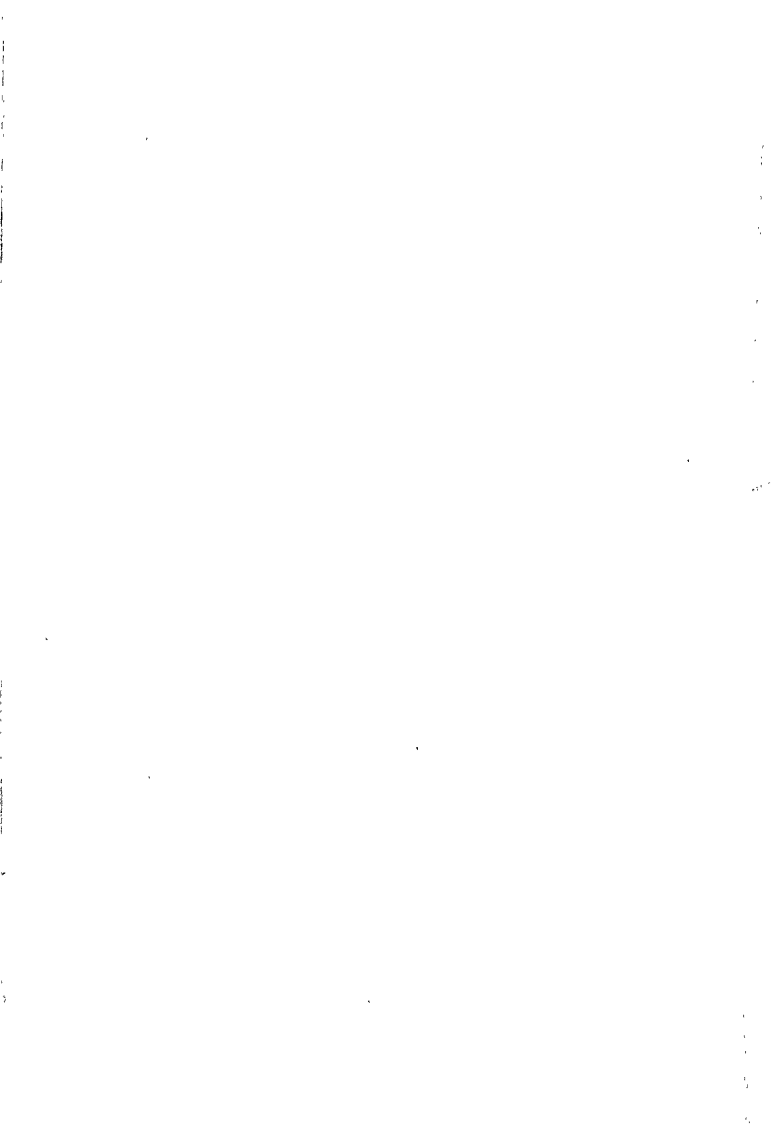
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INDEX

- Alexander S. 59-60, 66.
 A priori concepts 130-5
 propositions 122-5, 148.
 Aristotle 5, 9, 10, 16, 49
 Auden W.H. 17, 24, 35, 108, 167.
 Austen J.L. 131, 132, 198.
 Ayer A.J. 113, 123.
- Baicer K. 149.
 Beethoven 2, 32, 37, 152, 156, 164
 Bell C. v. 51, 58, 60, 62, 81, 95-101
 106.
 Blake W. 42.
 Black M. 149.
 Bridges R. 26, 172.
 Broad C. D. 129, 133, 164, 192.
 Browning R. 196.
 Bousma S. 92-4.
 Butcher S.H. 10.
- Cézanne 51.
 Coleridge S.T. 40, 43, 168.
 Collingwood R.G. v. 3, 33, 38-41,
 44-47, 50-58, 81.
 compactness Chap. VI, 152-5, 174.
 configuration 156-7.
 coherence 161-2, 197.
 criteria aesthetic 8, 12, 14. chap. VI.
 Croce B. 3, 11, 33, 38, 39, 44, 45, 50,
 51, 55, 92.
- Daiches D. 77, 78
 Dickens C. 162.
 description 142-145.
 Dewitt Parker H. 2.
 discovery 49, 50, 52.
 Donne J. 171.
- Einstein A. 159.
 emotion chap. IV, 58, 84, 89, 90-102.
 emotive language 114, 180, 181.
 Emmett D. 198.
 Empson W. 175.
- Eliot T.S. 2, 109, 160, 163, 167, 170
 173.
 evaluation 16, 17, 28, 108, 115, 154,
 191.
 ethics 18, 25, 117-121.
- fact 137.
 feeling chap. IV. 35, 54.
 form 5, 8, 11, 16, 58, 96, 97, 153.
 Forster E.M. 22.
 Fry R. 75.
 Furlong E.J. 54, 64-66.
- good instrumental and intrinsic 109,
 119, 120, 125-128, 151.
 evaluative and descriptive 27,
 116.
 Gardner W.H. 28, 42.
- Hall E. 130, 135-141, 146-148.
 Hampshire S. 13, 14, 18-21, 23-28.
 Hare R.M. 18, 23, 114-116.
 Hegel G.F. 3-5, 10, 11, 15, 197.
 Hopkins G.M. 24, 26, 28, 41, 42,
 160, 167, 172, 192, 195.
 Hume D. 133, 194.
- imagery 166, 170-175.
 imagination chap. III.
 implication 118, 120, 148.
 innate ideas 133, 134.
 Jeffares A.N. 79.
 Joyce J. 22.
- Kant I. 3, 4, 10, 33, 56, 121, 122, 195.
 Keats J. 28, 29, 36, 38, 40, 43, 183.
 Kennick W.E. 30.
 Knight H. 30.
- Langer S. v. 58-62, 72-74, 82, 85-92.
 language emotive and scientific
 114, 180-184.
 Lawrence D.H. 188.
 Leavis F.R. 166.

- Lewis C.D. 37, 165, 196.
 Lodge R.C. 8.
 Logical positivism 1, 113, 123, 178.
 Mac Neice L. 167.
 Malcolm N. 124, 125.
 McDougall W. 97, 98, 102-105.
 McTaggart J.M.E. 156, 163, 164, 192.
 Mill J.S. 110.
 Moore G.E. 109, 113, 118, 120, 125, 130, 134, 135, 140-144.
 naturalistic fallacy 110, 115.
 Newton I. 159.
 order 16, chap. VI.
 organic situation 128-130.
 organic unity 163-165.
 Osborne H. 46-49, 51, 154-157, 163, 164.
 Owen W. 167.
 particular 131, 135, 137-139.
 Perry R.B. 111, 140.
 picture theory 85, 88.
 Plato 5-10, 72, 156, 184, 192, 193.
 play 14.
 quality 14, 16, 31, 62, 140-145, 152, 158.
 first and second order 135, 137.
 Primary and secondary 112, 113, 128.
 simple 111.
 Ray S. 100, 115.
 Read H. 175, 186.
 Richards I.A. 35, 36, 37, 166, 168, 180-184.
 relations 75, 138-140, 165.
 Ross D. 112, 113.
 Roy J. 2.
 Russell B. 120, 121, 137, 192, 196.
 Ryle G. 35, 82, 83.
 Santayana G. 92.
 Schubert F. 184.
 Sidgwick H. 119.
 Scott W. 77, 78.
 Shakespeare W. 28, 174.
 Shelley P.B. 29, 36, 194.
 Shand A.F. 101.
 simplicity 158-161.
 solipsistic theory 33, 38, 39, 40, 50, 51.
 Spengler O. 193.
 Stebbing S. 159.
 Stevenson C.L. 1, 42, 43, 46-48, 52, 114.
 Stallworthy J. 79.
 Stock A.G. 191.
 supposal 55, 64-77.
 Spender S. 109.
 Swinburne A. 34, 163.
 Swann J.H. 25.
 symbol 5.
 discursive and presentational 72-74, 85-92.
 Tagore R. 89.
 Thomas D. 24, 34, 174.
 Thompson F. 36, 189.
 Toulmin S. 114.
 Toynbee A. 193.
 truth 7, 153, chap. VII.
 Tuve R. 171, 173, 175.
 Unterecker J. 79.
 Value. chap. V, 108, 119, 151.
 Whitehead A. N. 192, 196.
 Wilde O. 186.
 Wittgenstein L. 1, 68, 70, 72, 75, 85, 88, 137, 173, 194.
 Wordsworth W. 29, 35, 37, 43, 195.
 Yeats W.B. 77, 78, 79, 80, 156, 165, 167, 169, 174, 186, 191-194.
 Ziff P. 60-62.



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